

Histrionicus
Histrionicus

SBx 97.41.2 (57)

v. 61

Humber River, Newfoundland

Histrionicus histrionicus. HARLEQUIN DUCK.—Dr. Shattuck was told that this species breeds regularly on the Bay of Islands.

Auk. xxx, Jan. 1913, p. 115.

Histrionicus histrionicus

1887 Mass.

Nov. 3 Cohasset. Mr. Ellery H. Clark writes me that a pair of Harlequins were shot at above time and place by Mr. C. V. Barnes of Cohasset. The female was only wing broken and escaped but the male was killed and mounted and is now in Mr. Barnes's possession. Mr. Clark has examined it and assures me that it is an old bird in the finest possible plumage.

1893

Oct or Nov. Cohasset. Mr. Matthew Burr Jr. tells me that while shooting Cost this autumn he killed a ♀ Harlequin at Cohasset.

Rhode Island

Dec. 29 Narragansett Pier "Yesterday Dec. 29 a boy brought ashore at Narragansett Pier a young ♂ Harlequin Duck nearly adult. Mr. Newton Dexter had a friend there xxx who secured it for him and Mr. D. afterwards brought it to me and it will soon stand in the Rhode Island collection. Mr. Dexter about 30 years ago killed three Harlequins at Sakonnet Point. Beside these four birds we have no record of the occurrence of this species in Rhode Island" (J. M. Southwick in letter Dec. 30, 1893)

1888 Mass.

November Wareham. "I have secured the Harlequin. It is a young male not quite in full plumage. It was shot off Little Bird Island at the head of Buzzard's Bay in November, 1888. I saw it in the flesh at the time but don't remember the exact date, only that it was early in the month." This (Letter of Outram Bangs June 4, 1890. The specimen was mounted by Washburn of Wareham & is now in my collection.

Birds within Ten Miles of Poin-
de Monts, Can. Comeau & Merriam

117. *Histrionicus minutus*. HARLEQUIN DUCK.—Rare, and only seen during the latter part of April and early in May. This year Mr. Comeau saw two April 16, and shot one May 8, out of a flock of four.

Bull. N. O. C., 7, Oct., 1882, p. 240

Records from Toronto. E. E. T. Seton.

HARLEQUIN DUCK. *Histrionicus torquatus*.—A female of this species is now in the rooms of the Toronto Gun Club. It was killed here in the fall of 1881, by Mr. Wm. Loane, who claims also to have taken a pair in the spring of 1861.

Auk, 2, Oct., 1885, p. 337

An Ornithologist's Summer in Labrador
M. Abbott Frazar.

Histrionicus minutus, Harlequin Duck. A few immature birds with an occasional adult summer about Cape Whittle, where they can be found about the outer islands and most exposed ledges fishing in very deep water. Two specimens were brought me on July 5th. None breed.

O. & O. XII, Feb. 1887, p. 19

Ontario Bird Notes.

Histrionicus histrionicus. HARLEQUIN DUCK.—A female was taken at the Eastern Sandbar, Toronto, on October 20, 1894. The Harlequin Duck can be regarded as only a straggler on Lake Ontario. I have the records of three more specimens taken here in recent years; two immature males and a mature female.

James H. Fleming, Toronto, Can.

Auk, XVII, April, 1900, p. 176

Birds of Toronto, Ontario.

By James H. Fleming.

² Auk, II, 1885, 337.

Pt. I, Water Birds.

³ Auk, XVII, 1900, 176.

Auk, XXIII, Oct., 1906, p. 445.

49. *Histrionicus histrionicus*. HARLEQUIN DUCK.—Migrant, probably accidental. A female recorded by Mr. Ernest Seton,² and a male (no date), are in the collection of Mr. Maughan; a male (no date), and a female taken October 20, 1894,³ are in my collection; both females are adults and the males are in moulting plumage; all four are, I think, fall birds.

Histrionius torquatus.

Record of occurrence on Maine coast.

Matineus Id. Maine
 1880-1883.

Manly Hardy has furnished me with the following record of *Histrionius* received by him in the flesh from Matineus Id.

~~1880.~~	Jan	Feb.	March	Apr.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
1880.	1	6	—	1	—	1	6
1881.	6	1	2	4	—	29	—
1882.	13	—	1	1	2	14	—
1883.	1						
	21	7	3	6	2	44	6

" In all 89 birds. The earliest was taken Oct. 24, the latest April 30. The wash on coast.

very best of Get-or more usually in
November. They come in flocks and
locate about four outlying ledges
where, whether all killed, they remain
through the winter. In Nov. the smaller
usually permits the geese to dissect in
their ledges which at other times are
inaccessible. Hence the large number
killed that winter. There is also usually
a small flock in January when
the geese kill about all that
are left. After that few are left,
highly because about all have been
killed. They are very local in
dist. buton; I have never heard one
west of Matineis and
from at least 80 of my 89 were killed on a
very small island about 6 mi. of ledges.
In Nov. 1882 they showed no interest
numbers & I could have had 80 to
40 at one time had I wished
for them.
(Extract from letter dated July 6, 1882)

Histrionicus torquatus

In Mass.

Ipswich, Mass.
Feb. 23, 1882.

Under date of Apr. 15, 1883 Mr. E. C. Greenwood of Ipswich, Mass. writes me that he took a pair of Harlequins at Bar Rock at the mouth of Ipswich River, Feb. 23, 1882. They were sitting on the rock and were very tame. The ♂ was a fine adult. The day before there had been a severe storm.

Mr. Tufts of Lynn has two specimens taken near that place, one of which was shot the past winter 1882-3.

**Ducks of Cohasset, Mass., 1860-92.
O.H.E. Boston, Mass.**

17. Harlequin Duck (155). Very rare. One
♂ taken by Mr. C. V. Bamer, November 3, 1887.

O. & O. Vol. 17, June, 1892 p. 90

Histrionicus histrionicus.

The Ducks of Plymouth County, Massachusetts.
by Herbert K. Job.

Auk, XIII, July, 1896, pp. 197-204.

See under Anas obscura.

3. *Histrionicus histrionicus*. HARLEQUIN DUCK. — Mr. Knoess informs me that during the time he has been engaged as a taxidermist at Riverhead, he has mounted four specimens of this species. I have secured the following particulars regarding the capture of three of them.

Mr. W. W. Reeves, of Greenport, Suffolk Co., writes: "I shot the Harlequin Duck in January, 1865, on Gull Island, while I was keeper of the light. There were four of them living around the Island sometime before I had a chance to kill one. The bird I secured was a male. I crippled a female at the same time but did not secure her, as the tide was running so swiftly. They were the first of the kind I ever saw, nor have I seen but two since. They are a diving Duck, and like to play around the rocks. I watched them play several times while they were there; they chased each other about as boys do while playing tag.

"I have gunned over forty years, and as far south as Savannah, Ga., and never saw this Duck anywhere except on the island, so I think it a rare bird."

Mr. Josiah Robbins, of Bayshore, Suffolk Co., writes: "The Harlequin Duck which I have is a male and was alone when shot. It was killed in the latter part of January, 1883, in the South Bay, opposite Fire Island Inlet. The bay was frozen over at the time, except a few air-holes. It was killed by Capt. Samuel Hulse, who is about fifty-five years of age, and has always followed the bay. He says it is the only one that was ever seen here, to his knowledge."

Mr. George E. Post, of Greenport, writes: "My Harlequin Duck I think is by no means common. They are here only in very cold winters, and even then only a few. The one I have was shot on the shore of Long Island Sound, near the village of Southold. I think it is a male."

Giraud says of this species: "On the shores of Long Island I have known the young only to occur, although some of our most experienced bay-men say that a number of years since the occurrence of the adult was not unusual."*

It is probable, owing to the marked appearance of this bird, that almost all that are shot in this locality, where it is so rare, are preserved, and we therefore in the above records have approximately its numbers in the waters that surround the island.

* Birds of Long Island, p. 337.

Auk, 3, Oct., 1886. p. 434-35.

Histrionicus histrionicus. HARLEQUIN DUCK.—One specimen in the collection, recorded in *Auk*, Vol. VI, p. 67, by George B. Badger.

Auk X. July. 1893 p 270.

Auk, XIII, Jan. 1896, p. 78.

Another Harlequin Duck Record for Long Island.—A male Harlequin Duck (*Histrionicus histrionicus*) was shot at Orient Point (directly opposite Plum Island, L. I., where the species has formerly been taken) on November 11, 1895, and was mounted by a local bird stuffer. A female accompanied the male but was not procured. The male is now in the possession of Mrs. James Douglas of Orient, L. I.—W. W. WORTHINGTON, Shelter Island Heights, N. Y.

6. *Crymophilus fulticatus*. RED PHALAROPE.—Mr. G. E. Payne, of New York City, while bay-bird shooting at Shinnecock Bay, September 26, 1885, procured a female of this species in full winter plumage. He presented the specimen to me, in the flesh, and gave me the following note of the capture. "My gunner, Charles Lane, first observed the bird, and concluded it to be a stranger. It was quietly feeding, and although we were quite close, it did not appear to notice us. It was alone. It was pronounced a Phalarope, but none of the members of the Lane family, who are all gunners, remember having seen one like it before."

6. *Phalaropus lobatus*. NORTHERN PHALAROPE.—The only note of this species made by the writer since his record* of the unusual flight which took place in May, 1883, is of one which struck Fire Island Light during the night of May 19, 1884. Wind south south-west, fresh. Weather cloudy.

7. *Phalaropus tricolor*. WILSON'S PHALAROPE.—Mr. G.

Histrionicus histrionicus on Long Island, New York.—I wish to record the capture of a specimen of *Histrionicus histrionicus* taken on Long Island, New York, Nov. 22, 1878. The bird was a male, not quite, but almost in mature plumage, and was shot in the bay south of Freeport, Long Island, and on account of its oddity brought to me. The specimen is now in the collection of the Long Island Historical Society.—GEO. B. BADGER, *Haywards, California*.

Auk, VI. Jan., 1889. p. 67-68.

Bird Notes from Long Island, N. Y. William Dutcher.

5. *Histrionicus histrionicus*. HARLEQUIN DUCK.—Since my previous records* of this species, one other specimen has come to my notice. Dr. Wm. M. Smith, Health Officer of the Port of New York, has in his possession a mounted specimen which was shot during the winter of 1887-88, in the vicinity of Swinburne Island, Lower Bay, New York Harbor, by one of the hospital employees stationed there. It was alone when secured.

Auk, VI. April, 1889. p. 134.
* Auk, Vol. III, p. 434.

Dutcher, Rare Long Island Birds.

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BREEDING OF THE HARLEQUIN DUCK
(*HISTRIONICUS MINUTUS*).

BY C. HART MERRIAM, M. D.

The Harlequin Duck is an inhabitant of the southern part of the circumpolar zone which Mr. J. A. Allen, in his admirable paper upon the Geographical Distribution of Animals, has designated the "Arctic Realm"; and is also found in some parts of the "Boreal Province" of the "North-Temperate Realm." At the commencement of the breeding season it retires from the sea-coast to the lakes and rivers of the interior, to return again with its young in autumn, whence, keeping the salt water, it migrates southward a sufficient distance to escape the masses of drifting ice that harass the ragged shores of the North during the winter.

In Siberia it is known to breed about Lake Baikal and in the Bureja Mountains (Radde); in Mantchuria and at various points in the great Stanowoi Range (Von Middendorff); about the Upper Amoor (Von Schrenck); and in Kamtchatka. On the American Continent it has been found breeding along the tributaries of the Yukon in Alaska (Dall); in the interior of the Fur Countries and about Hudson's Bay (Richardson); on the fresh water ponds of Labrador (Audubon); and in the Rocky Mountains within the limits of the United States (in Montana, Coues). It also nests in Newfoundland, Greenland, and Iceland (Kruper).

The accounts of the breeding habits of this species are extremely meagre, but all agree in placing its nest upon the ground, and usually in close proximity to swiftly-running water.

While in Newfoundland last winter I learned that these birds, which are here called "Lords and Ladies," are common summer residents on the Island, breeding along the little-frequented water-courses of the interior. I was also informed, by many different people, that their nests were built in *hollow trees*, like the Wood Duck's with us. Mr. James P. Howley, Geologist of Newfoundland, has favored me with the following response to a letter addressed to him on this subject:

"I received your note enquiring about the Harlequin Duck, but delayed answering it till the arrival of one of our Indians. . . . It is quite true the birds nest in hollow stumps of trees, usually on islets in the lakes or tarns of the interior. They usually frequent the larger lakes and rivers far from the sea-coast, but are also found scattered all over the country."

Bull. N. O. C. 8, Oct. 1883, p. 220.

RECENT OBSERVATIONS ON *HISTRIONICUS HISTRIONICUS* IN MAINE.

BY ARTHUR H. NORTON.

IN THE month of February, 1894, the writer spent several days on some of the outermost islands of Penobscot Bay, for the sole purpose of observing and collecting winter birds, and more especially to observe this species in life. I was accompanied by Mr. Fred Rackliff, a man admirably qualified for the work before us, he being an expert surfman, thoroughly acquainted with the region we had chosen, and a skilful ornithological collector. Had I been otherwise attended, my efforts in this connection would have been futile, owing to the sudden and violent changes of weather and sea on this coast in winter, and to the distance and roughness of the islands where we were to perform our labors.

Our departure was made from the main on Feb. 2 at 2 P. M., with a light westerly wind and smooth sea, we arriving at our first station about sunset. This was an island two miles in length, reduced by the sea to a ledge. At this place we had little hope of finding Harlequins, as I was told that there was but a single 'gutter' here, where the birds had been found with any regularity. Our objective point was an islet lying half a mile away which I was assured was the chief resort of these birds in this vicinity ten years earlier, when they could always be found, in winter around a particular arm of water or gutter, formed at low stages of the tide, on the outermost and roughest part of the islet.

For several days following we were greatly hampered in our movements by stormy weather, and not until the morning of Feb. 6 did we see our first Harlequins. On this morning the wind and sea were quite calm, the tide at about one hour of flood at sunrise, making the little niche alluded to a steep-sided, narrow cove into which the sea was but gently breaking. Very shortly after sunrise we saw a flock of eight Harlequins heading for it, with a swift, straight flight, and without a pause they dropped into the surf near it. We had already left the place, and witnessed this flight from a distance, but we quickly returned, and fastening our boat crept forward over and among the ragged rocks until we saw them

was quickly absorbed leaving the scum at the surface. A few hundred yards from the windward shore of the 'Big Island'

Camptolaimus
labradorius

Camptolaimus labradorius.

Copy of two letters relating to the Labrador Duck.

" Toronto, Dec.26th, 1897.

Wm.Dutcher, Esq.-

Dear sir-

In recently looking over a volume of the "Proceedings Boston Society of Natural History", for 1859, Vol.VI, page 359 I notice that Mr.Caleb Loring, jr., is credited with the donation of a Labrador Duck, on Feby 3rd, 1858.

In your article, Auk VIll, 1881, p.212, Mr.Cory refers to the only specimen in the Museum, as being donated by Theodore Lyman, evidently there is a mistake or else one is lost.

As this may possibly be worth investigating I respectfully submit the above.

Yours sincerely

70 Collier St., Toronto.

Hubert H.Brown. "

" Boston Society of Natural History.

Berkeley St., Boston, Mass.

Jan.12, 1898.

Dear Mr.Brewster-

I think the records prove that we have had at least two Labrador Ducks, Mr.Lyman's specimen presented Jany 15, 1851 and Mr.Loring's presented Feby 3, 1858.

Mr.Lyman's letter to you gave a very straight account,

Camptolaimus labradorius.

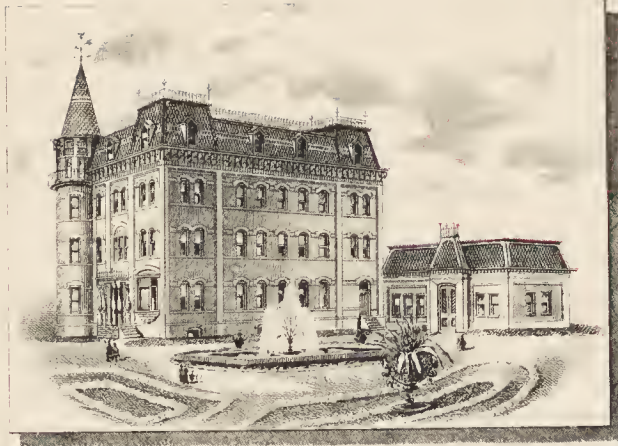
(No.2). the old label on the stand had his name on it, and all the data he gave for the Black-throated Diver also agreed with the manuscript record, so that I think his birds ought to be accepted.

Yours sincerely

Saml Henshaw. "



Camptolaimus labradorius



John Lewis Childs,
SEEDS, BULBS
& PLANTS.



Dictated by J. L. C.

Floral Park, N.Y. Dec. 17, 1902.

Mr. Wm. Brewster,
Cambridge, Mass.

My dear Sir:-

I expect to be in Boston early in January and would like the privilege of examining your collection of Birds and Eggs. Of course I know it to be very fine. My own collection of North American Birds and Eggs numbers about 1000 species of each. I have many that are exceedingly rare. I am soon to receive from Europe a fine male specimen of the Labrador Duck. It has cost me so much that I hardly believe I shall keep it if I have an opportunity to dispose of it.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, likely of John Lewis Childs, written in dark ink. The signature is fluid and elegant, with a long, sweeping tail.

Rare Birds in Nova Scotia
J. B. Gilpin.

To these causes I attribute Mr. Downs obtaining in the year 1850, three specimens of the Labrador Duck, the last ones seen here; nor have I seen any mention in any periodical of them since, though common in Wilson's time and known by

the gunners of Rhode Island in 1830.

Q. & Q. VII. May 15. 1882. p. 122-123.

General Notes

Another Specimen of the Labrador Duck.—As an addition to Mr. Dutcher's list of specimens of *Camptolaimus labradorius* present in other collections (see 'The Auk,' 1891, p. 201), I beg to state that the Dresden Museum possesses a female example, as to the history of which, however, I am only able to say that it was in Dresden before the year 1850 when Reichenbach published a figure of it in his 'Handbuch der speciellen Ornithologie: Natatores.' It has all the appearance of an antique specimen, and, that it is so, is further shown by the handwriting on the old label, according to which it came from Labrador.—A. B. MEYER, M. D., *Dresden, Saxony.*

Auk IX, Oct. 1892. p. 389

General Notes.

In Re Dutcher on the Labrador Duck.—Fearing that my statement in the January 'Auk,' p. 11, lines 1 and 2,—“D. M. Cole and his associate, Mr. Cary, saw a female duck with a brood of young which he was sure was this species,”—may give a wrong impression, notwithstanding the conclusion stated at the close of the paragraph, I now state that the bird seen was *not* a Labrador Duck. Mr. Cole has recently visited Cambridge, and through the courtesy of Mr. William Brewster was shown his specimens of the Labrador as well as other specimens of Ducks, and after a careful study of them, aided by Mr. Brewster, concludes that the bird he saw on the Grand River was a female of the genus *Glaucionetta*,—Golden-eye.—WILLIAM DUTCHER, *New York City.*

Auk XI, April. 1894 p. 175-76

Mass.

Camptolæmus labradorius

Dr. Samuel Cabot tells me that during his early ornithological experience (beginning when he entered Harvard College in 1832) this duck was far from common, he felt he then considered it extremely rare. He obtained only one specimen an adult ♀ which he bought in Faneuil Hall Market, of Robbins, who was constantly on the look out for rarities but who got for him only this one example. He remembers only one other being secured by any of his friends but

Proceedings Bos. Soc. Nat. Hist. ^{File under} Camptolæmus lab-
radorius.

—In the 'Proceedings' of the last annual meeting (1883) of the Boston Society of Natural History we notice the reported existence in the Society's collection of a specimen of the Labrador Duck (*Camptolæmus labradorius*) and an immature Black-throated Diver (*Colymbus arcticus*) which have been identified by the donor, the Hon. Theodore Lyman, as specimens which came into his possession in the flesh in 1850, under circumstances leaving little doubt of their Massachusetts origin, they having in all probability been killed in Boston Harbor. This example of the Labrador Duck is additional to those mentioned by the late Mr. G. D. Rowley, in his memoir on this species, as existing in museums.

Auk I. April, 1884. p. 207.

cannot be true just when or
 when this specimen was taken.
 At that time the historic pair
 shot by David Webb, and
 afterwards given to Audubon, was
 an object of curiosity and
 interest to ornithologists and
 sportsmen and he remembers
 talking with Mr. Webb about
 them. He is positive that the
 bird was then extremely
 rare on the New coast.
 (later taken after a talk
 with Dr. Cabot, Jan. 18, 1885)

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Auk I. April, 1884. p. 207.

Ym Dec 8 93

Wm Brewster

Dear Sir -

your Postal note. I am
sorry to say it will be
no use to try and get the
Falcon I done my best
but still I shall try when
I see the owner. Mr Wm
Butcher sent me a list
of the Pobador Duck and
I find Mr Carr has the
Tinnall I sold to Mr
Boardman in 1862. I find
Mr Boardman informed
Mr Carr, it was obtained
~~at~~ Grand Manan he knew
better for it was not

New York City.

Camptolaimus labradorius

Mr. George V. Lawrence tells me (Nov. 19, 1885) that fifty years ago the Labrador Duck was common in Long Island Sound. He has seen bunches of five or six hanging for weeks in the New York markets where they were usually left to spoil the bird being considered fishy and not fit for the table while in those days the taxidermists attached no special value to it.

Dutcher, Rare Long Island Birds.

Camptolaimus labradorius. LABRADOR DUCK.—The writer has already recorded full data regarding the specimen of the Labrador Duck in this collection. In this connection some statements by Mr. Akhurst relative to the former abundance of this now extinct Duck are of interest. During the period between 1843 and 1850 he made up a number of specimens and shipped them to England and Germany. A near neighbor of his was captain of a packet ship running between New York and England, and carried many specimens of American water fowl to collectors in England, among them at least twenty Labrador Ducks. Mr. Akhurst has no means of knowing to whom these birds were sent as they were purchased by the captain on orders. He filled a similar number of orders for Labrador Ducks for collectors in Germany, which were sent by a captain sailing from New York to some of the German ports. It is fair to assume even at this late day that some of these specimens must still be extant in Europe, presumably in private collections.

Auk X, July, 1893 p 270.

112. *Camptolaimus labradorius*. By W. H. Gregg. *Ibid.*, XIII, p. 128, Feb. 1879.—Record of the capture of a specimen at Elmyra, N. Y., Dec. 12, 1878.

Amer. Naturalist

Notes.

Mr. William Brewster has two specimens of the Labrador Duck in his collection at Cambridge, Mass., and we presume that there are more to hear from.

O. & O. XIV. Apr. 1889 p. 63

Brief Notes.

N. Vickery, who called a few days since, related the circumstance of selling a Labrador Duck a few years ago for a mere song. He did not know what the bird was at the time.

O. & O. Vol. 17, May 1892 p. 79

The Labrador Duck.

The specimen that was advertised a short time since in the O. & O. has been sold and as we predicted went into a European collection. It created quite an interest among our subscribers and we regret that we are not authorized to announce the purchaser. It is lost to America.

O. & O. Vol. 17, July, 1892 p. 110

General Notes.

An Additional Specimen of the Labrador Duck.—The Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia was recently presented with the natural history collections of the late George W. Carpenter of that city. The collections, which included a great number of mounted birds, were arranged in a separate museum building on the grounds of the Carpenter estate at Mt. Airy near Philadelphia, which forty or fifty years ago was one of the most famous private museums in the State and was visited by Mr. Audubon and other naturalists of note.

Upon examining the birds contained in the collection in May of the present year, preparatory to having them removed to the Academy, I was delighted to discover an adult male of the Labrador Duck (*Camptolaimus labradorius*) in a very good state of preservation. The bird was unfortunately without any label except a number referring to a catalogue which had been lost some years ago, and I was unable to obtain any information whatever concerning its capture.

This specimen (No. 30,245, coll. A. N. S. Phila.) is evidently additional to those enumerated in Mr. Dutcher's recent paper (*Auk*, VIII, p. 201), and together with the specimen recorded in 'The Auk' for October, 1892, (IX, 389) brings the whole number of known specimens up to forty.

The Philadelphia Academy has now a very fair representation of this species, as it previously possessed a female and two young males.—
WITMER STONE, Philadelphia, Pa. *Auk* X. Oct., 1893 p. 363.

General Notes.

The Labrador Duck.—An Overlooked Specimen and Record.—Mr. Ernest D. Wintle, of Montreal, Canada, lately called my attention to a heretofore overlooked record and specimen of the Labrador Duck. The following is an exact copy of the record as published in 'The Canadian Naturalist and Geologist,' Vol. VII, December, 1862, No. 6, pp. 426-427, by Archibald Hall, M.D., L.R.C.S.E., in his series of papers entitled 'On the Mammals and Birds of the District of Montreal.'

"*A. Labradorica*. Labrador Duck.

"*Fuligula Labradorica*. Anderson!

"*Camptolæmus Labradorus*. Gmel.! Gray! Baird!

"v. s. p. Cire flesh colour; remainder of bill blackish horn colour; tarsi and irides yellow.

"Dorsal aspect. With the exception of a streak of black stretching from the base of the bill to the occiput, and a very light brown streaky stain stretching from the cire to below the ear, all the rest of the head, with the secondaries, pure white; remainder of the back black; tail, which is rather acuminate rounded, blackish brown; the distal third of the outer edge of the outer scapulars coloured with black, and the whole of the inner vanes of the inner half dusky, terminating in blackish, giving to the under surface of the wing a dusky appearance; the primaries are all dusky black; the feathers on the cheek have a bristly feel; in other parts of the head and neck the feathers have a velvety feel, a good deal resembling that of the Great Northern Diver.

"Ventral aspect. A belt of white across the breast until it touches the wing, and separated from the white of the head by a ring of black about half an inch broad; remainder of breast black, quickly changing to blackish, which itself changes to brown on the abdomen and under wing coverts; the flanks, like the lower part of the breast, are shining black.

"Length, from tip of bill to apex of tail, $20\frac{1}{2}$ inches; alar expanse, $27\frac{1}{2}$ inches; the two first primaries longest and subequal.

"A specimen of this beautiful duck, the first which I have seen, was shot in the bay of Laprairie this spring (1862) by a *habitant*, and was purchased by Mr. Thompson of this city, who has kindly placed it at my disposal for examination. I believe it to be one of the rarest of our visitants of this species, and to demonstrate that an acquaintance with our Fauna must be a work of many years."

This specimen is the forty-second so far known, of which thirty are in North America. It gives me pleasure to announce that by purchase I have added this specimen to my collection.—WILLIAM DUTCHER, *New York City*.

Auk XI. April. 1894 p. 176

49. [*The Barnacle Goose and Labrador Duck*.] By Spencer F. Baird. Chicago Field, X, p. 74.—Respecting the occurrence of the first-named species in North America, and the former "abundance" and present scarcity of the last-named. *Chicago Field*

The May number contains a call for information respecting the distribution of the Labrador Duck, *Camptolæmus labradorius* (p. 303), by Dr. Coues. *Amer. Naturalist*, Vol. 10,

1352. *The Pied Duck (Camptolæmus labradorius)*. With cnt. By R. W. Shufeldt, C. M. Z. S., etc. *Ibid.*, No. 4, Aug. 18, p. 64.—A brief account of its history. *For. & Stream*, Vol. XXII

Auk, XIV, Jan., 1897, p. 87

Labrador Duck.—In the Museum at Amiens in France, which is located in a temporary and very unworthy building by the river, I was surprised to come across a fine adult male Labrador Duck, *Camptolæmus labradorius*, in good preservation. It was unknown to Mr. William Dutcher when revising the list of extant specimens (Auk, 1891, p. 201), but I conclude that it is probably one of the specimens which he mentions to have been sent to Europe by Mr. John Akhurst prior to 1850 (*op. cit.*, 1893, p. 270).—J. H. GURNEY, *Keswick Hall, Norwich, England*.

Boston Leather Company,

Successors to Wm. F. Johnson & Co.

Commission House
for the Sale of

Rough, Finished and Pickled Sheep,

Hides, Leather and Skins.

242 to 244 Purchase Street, 601 to 603 Atlantic Avenue.

J. B. BELL, PRES'T.
GORDON PLUMMER, TREAS.
WM. F. JOHNSON, ASS'T TREAS.

Boston, August 18. 1892

Mr. William Brewster.
Cambridge Mass
Dear Sir

Perhaps you would like
to know as a matter of record that I sold
my Labrador Deer in Europe for \$500 and have
got my money for it. There seems to be but a
"fiscayne" interest in Ornithology in America. When
an American Bird like the Labrador Deer is allowed
to leave the Country for a new future. I had
3 anxious buyers for it in Europe & could
probably have realized \$750 for it. as well as \$500.
I want to see my Collection of skins about 1000
as well ones as was ever got together. Will take
\$1200 for them. Yours in haste
John Brewster

Too business necessities selling. Otherwise money would not
buy them.

with Danell's or Graah's Islands--that they loaded one of their boats with their captives. All recent explorations of this inhospitable coast prove the utter vanity of the notion that the Gare-fowl is able there to find an asylum.

But it was in the seas of Newfoundland that this species, known to the settlers and fishermen as the "Penguin,"—a corruption of the words "pin-wing,"—was most abundant, as a reference to Hakluyt's and similar collections of voyages will prove. In 1536, or forty years after the discovery of the country, we find an island taking its name from the bird, and others are even now so called. English and French mariners alike resorted to these spots, driving the helpless and hapless birds on sails or planks into a boat, "as many as shall laide her," and salting them for provision. The French crews, indeed, trusted so much to this supply of victual, as to take, it is said, but "small store of flesh with them." This practice, we learn from Cartwright (*Journal, &c.*, iii. p. 55), was carried on even in 1785, and he then foresaw the speedy extirpation of the birds, which at that time had only one island left to breed upon. In 1819, Anspach reported their entire disappearance, but it is possible that some few yet lingered. On Funk Island, their last resort, rude enclosures of stones are, or recently were, still to be seen, in which the "Pin-wings" were impounded before slaughter; and a large quantity of their bones, and even natural mummies, preserved partly by the antiseptic property of the peat and partly by the icy subsoil, have been discovered. One of the last has furnished the chief materials from which the osteology of the species has been described (*Trans. Zool. Soc. v. p. 317*). Some 70 specimens of the bird's skin, about as many eggs, and nearly half-a-dozen more or less perfect skeletons, with detached bones of perhaps an hundred individuals, are preserved in collections; but even if there be any truth in the various reports of the appearance of the species since 1844 (some of which seem to rest on fairly good testimony), so that it may still survive, it is obvious that its rediscovery will most likely seal its fate.

Labrador
Duck.

Far less commonly known, but apparently quite as certain, is the doom of a large Duck which even fifty years

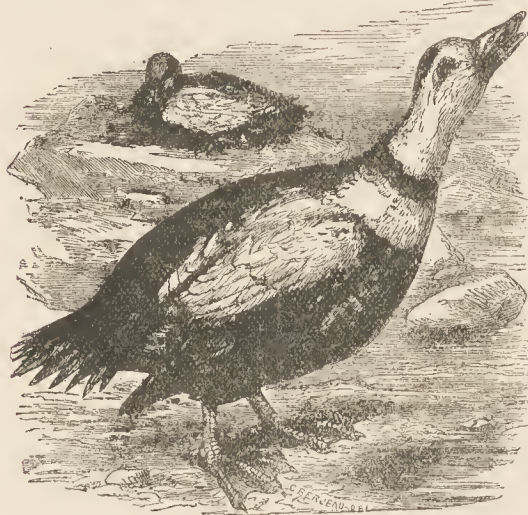


FIG. 43.—Pied Duck (*Somateria labrador*), male and female. From specimens in the British Museum. Reduced.

ago was commonly found in summer about the mouth of the St Lawrence and the coast of Labrador, migrating in winter to the shores of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, New England, and perhaps further southward. For many years

past, according to the best-informed American ornithologists, not a single example has been met with in any of the markets of the United States, where formerly it was not at all uncommon at the proper season, and the last known to the writer to have lived was killed by Col. Wedderburn in Halifax harbour in the autumn of 1852.¹ This bird, the *Anas labrador* of the older ornithologists, was nearly allied to the Eiders (*Somateria*), and like them used to breed on rocky islets, where it was safe from the depredations of foxes and other carnivorous quadrupeds. This safety was however unavailing when man began yearly to visit its breeding-haunts, and, not content with plundering its nests, mercilessly to shoot the birds. Most of such islets are, of course, easily ransacked and depopulated. Having no asylum to turn to, for the shores of the mainland were infested by the four-footed enemies just mentioned, and (unlike some of its congeners) it had not a high northern range, its fate is easily understood. No estimate has yet been made of the number of specimens existing in museums, but it is believed to be not very great.

Another bird which has become extinct within the last few years is one of a group of Parrots (*Nestor*) peculiar to

Phillip
Island
Parrot.



FIG. 42.—Phillip-Island Parrot (*Nestor productus*). From specimen in the British Museum. Reduced.

the New-Zealand Subregion, and though some of its congeners still exist in the less-frequented and alpine parts of that country, this species (*N. productus*) seems to have been confined to Phillip Island. The last known to have lived, according to information supplied to the writer by Mr Gould, was seen by that gentleman in a cage in London about the year 1851. Not much more than a dozen specimens are believed to exist in collections.

BIRDS PARTIALLY EXTERMINATED.

From Birds which have recently become altogether extinct we naturally turn to those that have of late been extirpated in certain countries though still surviving elsewhere. Several such instances are furnished by the British Islands. First there is the Crane (*Grus communis*) which in Turuer's time (1555) was described as breeding in our fens. Then the Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*), said by Sir Thomas Browne

¹ It is needless to observe that no one at that time had any notion of its approaching extinction.

THE LABRADOR DUCK:—A REVISED LIST OF
THE EXTANT SPECIMENS IN NORTH AMERICA,
WITH SOME HISTORICAL NOTES.

BY WILLIAM DUTCHER.

THE OBJECT of this revised list is to bring before the ornithologists of North America the great desirability of search among the private collections of mounted birds, scattered throughout this country, for specimens of this species of Duck, which in all probability is now nearly, if not altogether extinct. A further object is to record the exact history of the extant specimens so far as it can be gathered at this late day. There are but few naturalists or sportsmen now living who have had any experience with the Labrador Duck in life, and these are one by one passing away. Of the life history of this interesting species but little is known, for when it was common there were but few, if any, observers in the field, and the science of ornithology had not advanced to its present high plane. As long ago as when Audubon was in Labrador (see his 'Birds of America') it was so rare that he did not meet with it and the great Wilson said of it: "This is rather a scarce species on our coast."* Giraud, in his 'Birds of Long Island,' says: "With us it is rather rare."

It is true that at a later date than the above, say during the period from 1840 to 1860, there were apparently more of these Ducks seen than earlier.†

This, however, I think, may be easily explained as follows: during the later period there were a far greater number of scientific collectors, and there was a market demand for game and waterfowl which gave employment to professional gunners who shot and sent to market great numbers of birds. During the open season one can see hanging in our markets hundreds and sometimes thousands of Ducks of the commoner varieties; this has been the case for many years, perhaps to a lesser degree formerly because the demand was not then so great. While it is very

* American Ornithology, Vol. III, 1829, p. 369.

† See the letters and statements given below of such ornithologists as George N. Lawrence, D. G. Elliot, John G. Bell and others who were actively collecting at that date.

THE LABRADOR DUCK — ANOTHER SPECIMEN,
WITH ADDITIONAL DATA RESPECTING
EXTANT SPECIMENS.¹

BY WILLIAM DUTCHER.

MR. ERNEST D. WINTLE, of Montreal, Canada, a member of the Union, reports a heretofore unrecorded specimen of the Labrador Duck in the Museum of the Natural History Society of Montreal. It is a male in immature plumage, and was evidently mounted from a dried skin; it bears no date or record as to whence it was obtained. He has searched through the Journals of the Society from the beginning to date and cannot find any mention of the specimen therein, and no person connected with the Society seems to know anything about it.

This is the third specimen discovered since the publication of my 'Revised List,'² and makes the known specimens in America twenty-nine, and the total number extant forty-one.

A less pleasant duty than the recording of a newly discovered specimen of this extinct species now devolves upon me. I would gladly escape the responsibility, but justice to the ornithologists whom I quoted in my former paper, and also to myself, compels the following remarks. Prof. Alfred Newton, in his 'Dictionary of Birds,' pp. 221-223, makes the following statement under the subject 'Extirpation.'

"Far less commonly known, but apparently quite as certain, is the doom of a large Duck which until 1842 or thereabouts was commonly found in summer about the mouth of the St. Lawrence and the coast of Labrador, migrating in winter to the shores of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, New England, and perhaps further southward. There is no proof, according to the best-informed American ornithologists, of a single example being met with for many years past in any of the markets of the United States, where formerly it was not at all uncommon at the proper

¹ Read at the Eleventh Congress of the American Ornithologists' Union, held at Cambridge, Mass., Nov. 20-23, 1893.

² The Auk, Vol. VIII, pp. 201-216, April, 1891.

An Additional Specimen of the Labrador Duck.—A short time ago, while examining the contents of a large case containing a miscellaneous collection of wild-fowl skins, stored in the museum of the Boston Society of Natural History, I came upon an unlabelled skin that I identified as a juvenal male *Camptorhynchus labradorius*. Dr. Glover M. Allen also examined the specimen and referred it to the same species.

Unfortunately there was no label whatsoever on the skin to give the slightest clue as to when or where it was taken, and there is no reference to any such bird in the Proceedings of the Boston Society of Natural History.

Mr. C. Emerson Brown, who has mounted the specimen, states that it was in very poor condition; being so grease-burned that on relaxing, it disintegrated into countless small fragments. Besides leaving large masses of fat adhering to the skin the preparator had neglected to clean the skull. Such carelessness would lead one to believe that the bird was taken long ago, at a time when neither collector nor recipient considered this species worthy of any especial attention.

The following description may be of interest, though lacking in certain details, as it was taken from the mounted bird making a proper examination of the wings, axillars, etc., impossible.

Head brownish gray, darker on crown. Chin and throat white, this area extending half way around the upper neck, its posterior margin being less clearly defined owing to some of the feathers having narrow ashy tips. Rest of neck ashy. Upper breast with a light ashy area about one and a quarter inches wide, very slightly washed with light brown, extending about three quarters around the body. Breast dark gray with tinge of light brown, the ends of the feathers being minutely dotted and streaked with black. Lower breast, sides, belly, and under tail-coverts brownish gray, lighter on the belly. Scapulars brownish gray, some of the feathers having narrow ashy tips. Long scapulars more pearly. Lesser wing-coverts ashy. Secondaries and ends of greater wing-coverts white. Primaries brownish black; alula blackish brown. Lower back and tail-coverts brownish gray. Tail blackish brown with a slight hoary tinge.

Measurements in inches as follows: culmen, 1.55; bill along gape, 2.25; tarsus, 1.55; middle toe, 2.15.

This specimen is now on exhibition, with another young male of more advanced plumage, in the museum of the Boston Society of Natural History, and is I believe the forty-fourth extant to date.—WINTHROP S. Brooks, Milton, Mass. *Arch XXIX July 1912, pp. 389-390.*

Somateria
borealis

Birds within Ten Miles of Point
deMonts, Can, Comeau & Merriam.

118. *Somateria mollissima*. EIDER DUCK.— A permanent resident,
but rather rare.

Bull. N. O. C., 7, Oct, 1882, p. 240

About the first of April a few Eider
Ducks of both species (*Somateria mollis-*
sima) and (*S. spectabilis*) were shot near
St. John's; *Newfoundland Notes*

C. H. Merriam. Locust Grove. N. Y.

O. & O. VIII, June. 1883. p. 43.

An Ornithologist's Summer in Labrador
M. Abbott Frazar.

Somateria mollissima, Eider. Probably a mi-
grant, as one specimen taken on May the 18th,
not far from Esquimaux Point, showed a very
clear resemblance to this species.

O. & O. XII, Feb. 1887. p. 19

Birds of N. E. of Labrador
by Henry B. Bigelow.

30. *Somateria borealis*. NORTHERN EIDER.— Abundant north of Ham-
ilton Inlet. The eiders were usually in small flocks, males and females
separate. They breed commonly near most of the fiords.

Auk, XIX, Jan., 1902, p. 27.

Somateria mollissima

On C. Umbagog.

C. Umbagog, Maine

I have been told by Mr. J. G. Rich (in conversation, Bethel, March 13, 1883) that the Eider Duck occasionally occurs on Lake Umbagog. He believes he has a skin of one shot on that lake some years since; - at all events he is sure that he killed them there occasionally where he lived in that country.

Maine

Somateria mollissima

1887

Feb.

"I have just received a pair of European Eiders from Maine" (F. B. Webster letter of Feb. 10, 1887)
"The ♀ very dark & fine ♂ a good one but with brown patch on top of head." (Ibid.)

The Eider Ducks of the New England Coast.—In view of the general confusion and ignorance respecting New England Water Birds, it may be not amiss to call attention to the fact that two forms of the Eider Duck are found regularly in winter on our coast. Of these Dresser's Eider (*Somateria dresseri*) is the commoner, as well as probably the only one which breeds within our limits. The other, *Somateria mollissima* proper, is much less numerous, but still far from rare or accidental. It doubtless reaches Massachusetts, but I do not remember to have seen specimens from any point south of the mouth of the Penobscot River, Maine. The best authorities now regard *dresseri* as specifically distinct from *mollissima*.—WILLIAM BREWSTER, Cambridge, Mass. Auk, 2, Jan., 1885. p. 111

Essex Co., Mass.

Somateria mollissima

An adult ♀ in Peabody Academy Coll.
Salem. Labeled Essex Co., Mass. S. Gillson.
A juv. ♂ same data is also apparently
mollissima. Its head plate is of this
shape 

E. Mass.

A ♀ of typical mollissima in the Essex Co coll.
of the Peabody Museum at Salem labeled "Essex Co.
S. Gillson"
Also a ♂ juv. but typical perhaps missouri

Somateria mollissima (var.)

Notes from Norwich, Conn.

BY J. M. W.

In Noank, in this county, is a stuffed Eider
Duck, shot at Groton Long Point, in the Winter
of 1884. O. & O. X. May. 1885. p. 74

dresseri

Somateria dresseri

1894. Mass.

June 5 Hyannis. - At about ten o'clock this morning I saw six Eiders sitting on a large rock off the end of Great Island about 50 yds. from shore. Four of them were drakes in fully mature plumage; the other two were brown birds evidently females. They were resting quietly the majority prone on their bellies, one or two standing in rather erect attitudes. They discovered me very soon after I showed my head above the grass on the edge of the cliff and, taking at once to the water, swam quickly and silently well out to sea. There were two Sheldrakes (M. serrator) with them.

Maine. - H. A. Purdie tells me that Mr. Mann of Breeding on Arlington Heights, who has been collecting Ospreys eggs along the coast of Maine this season, says that Eiders still of Maine breed on some of the small outer islands near Isle au Haut where the fishermen continue to rob them of their eggs.

1895 Rhode Island

Jan'y 29 Narragansett Bay. Lieut. M. Robinson showed me a pair which Wintering in R. I. he killed off Narragansett Pier. He saw numbers & says they are always common in winter in Nar. Bay between Narragansett Pier and Point Judith.

1885 Maine

about July 12 Duck Island. - Nest with three eggs taken by H. K. Job (Tide H. K. J. in conversation Dec. 26, 1894)

1897 Rhode Island

Feb. 5 West Island. About 100 seen in small flocks & one bird (a male) shot by Edward Stewart.

Somateria dresseri

1896. Penobscot Bay, Maine.

Saddleback Ledge. June 22 ♀ with nest 4 fresh eggs.

Spirit Ledge " " (♂♀) flying in company past ledge.

Saddleback Ledge. June 22. Nest 4 perfectly fresh eggs - at base of large boulder under spreading leaves of umbelliferous plant which covered it perfectly from above & every side. Nest a thin mat of coarse dry grass lining a slight hollow scraped in the ground. Eggs resting on and all but one covered by the birds down. A straight & well worked run-way led from the nest through a bed of small beach pebbles to the bare shingle 6 or 8 feet distant. The ♀ bird flew either from the nest or from this shingle when our boat was 200 yds. off. She flapped heavily for 100 yds. then letting her wings relax 50 yds. & alighted on the water. She hung closely about the island all the time we were there bobbing about in the tide way, occasionally rising & flying a few hundred yards. No ♂ here here.

This is the fifth successive year that Conway has found (and robbed) an Eider's nest on ~~exactly~~ the same spot at the foot of this boulder. He has never found more than 4 eggs in this nest.

July 4 Way Ledge. One of the fishermen told Conway to-day that during the past two weeks he and some of the other fishermen have taken ten Eider's eggs from a nest on this island. The poor bird has never succeeded in getting more than two eggs in the nest at a time & often there has been only one found but she has kept on laying without changing her nesting place or nest.

Somateria dressini

1896 Penobscot Bay, Maine.

July 9 Saddleback Bedge. - Three nests with sets of 4, 4, & 5 eggs taken by Ralph Newman Knight of Deer Island. I bought the set of 5 & one set of 4 unblown, three days later. The set of 4 proved to be fresh, that of 5 incubated four or five days. I do not know as to the condition of the eggs in the remaining set. Knight says that all three nests were on the northern half of the island, some distance apart & in long, dense grass - not under nor near rocks or weeds or the thicket of gooseberry bushes. A conspicuous path trampled through the grass by the bird led to each nest. Knight saw but one Duck a ♀ who flew from the island when his boat was still some distance away. In all three nests the eggs were completely covered with down when found.

June 16-22 Matineus Islands. None are now to be found breeding on any of these islands. (H. K. Job in conversation, 1896)

An Ornithologist's Summer in Labrador
M. Abbott Frazar.

* *Somateria dresseri*, American Eider. About Esquimaux Point a few "Moyac," as the Indians call them, still struggle against hard fate in an honest endeavor to rear their young, but the gulls that fly and the gulls that walk are generally too much for the poor ducks, and the successful ones are those which go back from the shore and secrete their nests among the spruces in the centre of the islands. At Musquarro I really first met with them. We anchored there late in the afternoon, and as I was rather tired after being aboard for several days, I thought a run on land would be a pleasant relief. So I started in my small boat for a little island of not over two acres in extent, which lay just under our stern. The island, which was very steep and rounded, was covered with a short soft grass about six inches high, and as I approached the shore, first one head bobbed up and then another, until I was soon aware that I had fallen in with quite a colony.

The nests were scattered about everywhere, among the small rocks just above tide-water, and in the grass all over the island. They were always built of the soft, slate-colored down from the parents' breast, which made a fitting receptacle for the beautiful greenish-yellow eggs, the handsomest of all the ducks. After landing on this island, it took me less than two hours to gather in some seventy odd sets.

A favorite place for an eider to build, is at the foot of some large rock, or in an angle formed by two rocks, where they are sheltered from the wind, and times without number, I would come suddenly upon birds in such positions; and once, in stepping over a rock, my foot came squarely down upon an Eider's back, and I doubt which was scared the most, the old duck or myself. Another time, I came upon a nest placed upon some high rocks, in such a way that as I approached from the only opening the bird was fairly penned, and after making one or two vain attempts to jump over the rocks, mother duck settled back and quacked for mercy. I held her some time and by scratching the top of her head I apparently succeeded in making her feel quite contented.

Of the large number of nests I examined, most of them contained four or five eggs. A large number held six, two seven; and one nest had eight. If not disturbed, the bird on leaving the nest draws the down over it, and so conceals the eggs. The male never sits, and leaves the female soon after the eggs are laid, and gathering into large flocks they wander about wherever their food is the most abundant. As soon as the young are hatched the mother leads them to the water, and as many as three or four broods combine together, serving as a natural protection against the rapacious Saddlebacks; but even this protection often proves insufficient, and many is the poor duckling which meets his fate in this way. By the time their feathers start they are old enough to be safe against the gulls, but then man comes along with his surer means of destruction and shoots them on all occasions, for they are certainly delicious eating.

Of all birds which I met on the Labrador coast, for none did I feel such a genuine sympathy as for the persecuted Moyac. A Murre faces extermination with a stupid ignorance

which does not command respect, but an Eider is an intelligent bird and of such a quiet disposition, that it really seems as though their greatest failing was their seeming confidence in man. They are persecuted with relentless energy by both man and beast from the time they arrive up to the time they leave, and the countless hordes which once inhabited this coast are fast disappearing, and it will not be long before the Eider of Southern Labrador, like the Eider of Grand Manan will be but a memory of the past.

O. & O. XII, Feb. 1887, p. 19-20.

Notes-Birds of Grand Manan.
Chas. H. Andros.

American Eider, *Somateria dresseri*. The "Sea Ducks" are fast diminishing on and about Grand Manan. They are now found in flocks of from a dozen to thirty and have become so wary from constant persecution, that we found it exceedingly difficult to approach within gunshot of a bunch. The blame for this decrease may be bestowed upon the Quoddy Indians, (The last remnant of the once powerful tribe of Passamaquoddys) who stop on the lower outlying islands during the spring and keep up a fusillade on both these and the Gulls. The fact that the celebrated down brings a good market price makes the demand so great for the Eider that driven from one shore to another by their relentless hunters they take to land very sparingly to oviposit and the nests become scarcer each year. The more enlightened people of Grand Manan have gradually come to a sense of duty over this slaughter, but as yet no definite steps have been taken to suppress it. The culprits are out of reach of the law on the uninhabited islands where they hold full sway, and like the colonies of Cormorants and Wild Geese which once swarmed the island, the Eider Duck will soon become a thing of the past. The feathers are worked up into fantastic shapes for head gear and other ornamental purposes and when a higher temperature causes the tourists to flock to Mt. Desert, Bar Harbor and other fashionable watering places of the Maine coast, they drive a very fair business at this questionable traffic.

O. & O. XII, Sept. 1887 p. 151 - 152

Addendum to List of Birds known to Occur
within Ten Miles of Point des Monts, Quebec, Can.
From notes of U. A. Comeau, Taken at Godbout.

172. *Somateria dresseri*.—Mr. William Brewster has recently called my attention to the fact that among the skins of Eider Ducks sent me by Mr. Comeau are examples of both *S. mollissima* and *S. dresseri*.

C. Hart Merriam

Auk, 2, Jan., 1885. p. 113.

Locust Grove, N. Y.

The Eider Ducks, called by our gunners 'Sea Ducks,' visit us in the autumn in immense throngs. Flying close to the water in horizontal lines, they pass along our shore early in November, and continue on through the Straits of Canso and along the eastern shore of Nova Scotia to the mouth of the Bay of Fundy. Occasionally, however, a flock with more sagacity has been seen to mount into the air and fly across the land to the head waters of the Bay. None of this species have been observed on our coast during the spring months, when their line of flight is said to be along the north-eastern shore of Cape Breton and to the Straits of Belle Isle. In all the throngs of this species that pass us no adult males are ever seen.

Pictou Co. N.S.

James M. Kinlay.

Auk 2. Jan. 1885. p. 43.

Birds, Haute Island, Bay of Fundy, July 26, 1887. W. L. Bishop, Kentville, N.S.

Eider Duck, *Somateria mollissima dresseri*; a few pairs breed here.

O. & O. XII, Sept. 1887 p. 145

Notes from the Magdalen Islands.

Somateria dresseri. June, 1900.

H. K. Job, Kent, Conn.

Auk, XVII, April, 1901, p. 200.

Capture of a Specimen of *Somateria dresseri* in the vicinity of Ottawa, Canada.—On November 7, 1889, after a strong easterly storm the writer shot a young male of this species, in the plumage of the female, while flying up the River Ottawa a short distance below the City. This is, I believe, the first specimen obtained in this locality.—Geo. R. White, Ottawa, Canada.

Auk, VII, April, 1890. p. 204.

Birds of N. S. by Frederick
by Henry B. Bigelow.

31. *Somateria dresseri*. AMERICAN EIDER.—Abundant south of Hamilton Inlet, where it takes the place occupied by *S. borealis* in the north. An important article of food for the settlers. The Eskimo make tobacco pouches from the skins of the young ducks. Auk, XIX, Jan., 1902, p. 27.

Birds of Toronto, Ontario.

II

By James H. Fleming.

Pt. I, Water Birds.

Hypothetical List.

Auk, XXIII, Oct., 1906, p. 453.

11. *Somateria dresseri*. AMERICAN EIDER.—Prof. Hineks gives this in his list, and a pair were sent to Paris. I have carefully examined a number of eiders from the Great Lakes, including several recorded as this species; all prove to be *S. spectabilis*.

Breeding of *Somateria dresseri* near Isle au Haut, Maine. — On June 26, 1895, I found three nests with eggs of the American Eider on Spirit Ledge, a small island about five miles from Isle au Haut, Maine. The nests were placed on the ground in the midst of a clump of umbelliferous plants, which were growing near the center of the island, and contained two fresh eggs, and incubated sets of three and six eggs respectively. The two latter nests were found by flushing the females. Later in the day I found a fourth nest, containing four eggs, on Saddleback Ledge, about three miles distant from Spirit Ledge. This last nest was on the ground in plain sight, but the eggs were hidden by a thick covering of down. Incubation was advanced about four days. The eggs are a greenish drab color and measure 3.05×2.10 , 3.17×2.05 , 3.06×2.05 , and 3.16×2.05 inches.

The captain of the boat which conveyed me to the islands informed me that the fishermen considered the eggs a great delicacy, and collected them for cooking purposes. He also informed me that the 'Sea Ducks,' as he called them, used to nest in much greater numbers near Isle au Haut, but that the constant persecutions of the fishermen had lately caused the birds to nest on the ledges in greatly reduced numbers. — ORA W. KNIGHT, *Bangor, Maine*.

Somateria mollissima (dresseri)

Spring flight - Mass.

Weymouth Sound, Mass.

April 18, 1883

Crossing the Sound from Nantucket to
Wood's Hole by Steamer I saw four large flocks
of Eiders near the Cross Rips. They were flying
northward & evidently migrating. One flock
must have contained nearly a hundred birds.
They flew in long lines, each bird following
closely in the wake of the next. The males at
a distance seem to have the forward half of
the body with the head & neck - many white.
The males and females ~~seemed~~ were disposed
irregularly, often two or three of each occurring

Somateria mollissima dresseri

In Mass.

Cape Cod (!) Mass.

February 13, 1884

About forty Eiders in a single flock in
the market to-day. I went through the
whole lot carefully and all, ♂♂ & ♀♀
alike, were typical of the variety dresseri.
In fact I could not find one which
seemed to even approach Somateria
mollissima proper and there was little
variation in the shape of the frontal
lobes.

Another peculiar fact was that in
the entire number there was not a

Birds of Bristol County, Mass.
F. W. Andros.

Somateria dresseri Sharpe., American Eider.
Winter visitant, very rare. Observed off the
coast.

O. & O. XII. Sept. 1887 p. 138

single immature ♂. These
ducks were said to have been
shot on Cape Cod but I fancy
they probably came from
Newfoundland.

together. They flew close to the
water and very swiftly. They presented
a fine appearance. The day was
warm and perfectly still.

Birds of Bristol County, Mass.
F. W. Andros.

Somateria dresseri Sharpe., American Eider.
Winter visitant, very rare. Observed off the
coast.

O. & O. XII. Sept. 1887 p. 138

Ducks of Cohasset, Mass., 1860-92
O. H. E. Boston, Mass.

18. American Eider (160). Uncommon, and usually very shy. I have records of eight or ten specimens which have been taken during seven northeast storms.

O. & O. Vol. 17, June, 1892 p. 90

Water Birds, Nantucket, Mass.
George H. Mackay.
General Notes.

Somateria dresseri.—April 2, 1892. The American Eiders which have been living off the north shore of this island departed last night. (Last year they left on March 28, 1891.) On the previous afternoon I saw one hundred and fifty (estimated). On the afternoon of May 1, 1892, I saw nine at the south side of the island, flying east.

Auk 9, July, 1892. p. 305.

Notes on Certain Water Birds in Mass.
George H. Mackay.

Mr. H. G. Nutter of Boston, Mass., informs me that on April 15, 1894, he saw seven flocks of American Eiders off Welfleet, Cape Cod, Mass. There were five to seven in each flock. On the 20th he also saw three flocks, with three to five birds each.

Auk XI. July. 1894 p. 226

Somateria m. dresseri.

The Ducks of Plymouth County, Massachusetts.
by Herbert K. Job.

Auk, XIII, July, 1896, pp. 197-204.

See under *Anas obscura*.

Auk, XIII, July, 1895, p. 310.

Nantucket Notes.
Somateria dresseri.

November 8, I saw a flock of *Somateria dresseri*, seven females, later three males, in Nantucket Sound. In a letter received from Mr. Vinal N. Edwards, dated Woods Hole, Mass., Jan. 16, 1895, he informs me, that from the 1st to the 5th of November, 1894, the wind had been strong S.W. to W.; the week previous it was N.E. to S.E., cloudy and rainy. On Nov. 5, 1894, the first American Eiders (*Somateria dresseri*) of the season were noted by him, — a flock of thirty-seven. By the 27th about one thousand had collected, but the gunners drove them away, and the weather being so moderate they remained in the Sound to feed. On Jan. 15, 1895, there were about one thousand in the Hole but they only remained about two hours.

George H. Mackay, Nantucket, Mass.

NOTES ON CERTAIN WATER BIRDS IN MASSACHUSETTS.

BY GEORGE H. MACKAY.

THE entire month of March was unusually mild and warm, without storms, southwest and west winds generally prevailing. I do not remember ever having experienced a similar one. I passed through Vineyard Sound on my way to Nantucket Island, Mass., on March 9, 1894; also on my return on the 20th of the same month. On the 28th of April I again made the trip, returning on May 5. I saw but few sea fowl of any description. I was on Muskeget Island, Mass., March 11, remaining until the 18th. Prior to my arrival there had been about two hundred American Eiders (*Somateria dresseri*) living between Muskeget and Tuckernuck Islands, half of which had been killed, and a portion of the remainder driven away, before I arrived. Of these two hundred birds, three quarters were males. This number is less than were sojourning here last year and is undoubtedly owing to the scarcity of shell-fish food in this particular locality. The few birds which remained after my arrival apparently departed on the 16th of March.

During the latter part of February, 1894, about two thousand American Eiders had been living around Cape Poge, Martha's Vineyard, and what is new in my experience, large numbers of them frequented daily the Great Pond on Chappaquidic Island, M. V., to feed. They had undoubtedly observed the large numbers of Scoters which also frequented this pond to feed and followed their example. It may be interesting to know, in this connection, that those Eiders frequenting the north side of Nantucket, also for the first time in numbers, came into the harbor of Nantucket to feed. The cause in both instances was undoubtedly the better food supply. At Woods Holl, Mass., Mr. Vinal Edwards informed me that the American Eiders had again appeared in 1894, as in 1893, in very large numbers during the latter part of the winter, his estimate of their number being between four and five thousand birds, which daily frequented the

waters between Woods Holl and Naushon Island, Mass. On March 13, 1894, during a strong southwest wind, they all departed and were not observed afterwards. Mr. Edwards had saved the contents of the stomachs of some Eiders which were shot on February 11 and 15, which I saw; they consisted of sculpin spawn, in perfect condition, in small masses stuck together, and black mussels (*Modiola modiolus*) ground up to the consistency of fine sand and black in color. Four female King Eiders (*S. spectabilis*) were taken there on February 20, 1894, and the contents of the stomachs saved, which I also saw, consisted entirely of *Tritea trivittata* in good quantity and condition.

Such a very large collection of Eiders, in so restricted a locality as the one above mentioned, can only be explained by the great abundance of the black mussel which these birds first discovered in the winter of 1892-93. These beds of mussels had increased to such an enormous extent that some of them, which were attached one to another, are said to be five feet or more in thickness. Only such masses are able to survive under the peculiar conditions which exist there, due to the great pressure of water which rushes with great force through this narrow passage or strait, connecting Buzzards Bay with Vineyard Sound. When the birds were disturbed by the steamboats which passed daily they would fly out into the Sound, where they would remain awhile, returning later. Although considerably harassed, and many shot, it apparently produced little effect on them, for they refused to forsake so attractive a feeding ground, and continued to frequent it. I have little doubt that they will again appear in the same large numbers if the food supply continues in this locality next season.

Auk XI. July. 1894 p. 223-24

April Mr. Geo H. Mackay has many Eiders during his April shooting but bags but few. They are shy of a boat and will rarely pass by or over a line of boats as Coats & Old Squares do freely but, on the contrary, almost invariably turn back and pass out around the end of the line.

Birds at Sea.— On December 8, 1912, a live female Eider Duck (*Somateria dresseri*) was brought to me. It had been captured on the deck of the steamship 'Juniata,' off Cape Cod, Mass., December 5, having come aboard in a dense fog. It lived for ten days on celery tops — all other food refused — at the end of which time it died, and is now in my collection.

On about October 16, 1911, two young Duck Hawks were captured on a tramp steamer coming to this port for bunker coal. The mate informed me they were about one hundred miles off Hatteras when the birds were taken. An Osprey also came aboard the same day, and all were easily captured as they were utterly exhausted. There had been a bad storm the day previous. These birds were examined by both my father and me and pronounced young of the year. We were unable to purchase them from the sailors.— HAROLD H. BAILEY, *Newport News, Va.*

Auk 30, April, 1913. p.

281, 282.

West Haven, Conn.

***Somateria dresseri*. AMERICAN EIDER.**— Young King Eiders (*Somateria spectabilis*) often occur in late fall on the Connecticut coast, but the only record for the present species that I know of since 1877 (Merriam, Trans. Conn. Acad., IV, 1877, p. 127) is that of a young male which Mr. Alanson Ganung shot off West Haven on December 20, 1909, and very kindly gave me in the flesh.

Auk 27, Oct-1910 p. 462.

1185. *Capture of an Eider Duck.* By L. S. Foster. *Ibid.*, No. 17,
Nov. 18, p. 323.—A young male *Somateria dresseri* shot Nov. 8, 1886, at
Center Moriches, Long Island, N. Y. *For. & Stream*. Vol. XXVII

1120. *Eider Duck in Michigan.* By R. B. Lawrence. *Ibid.*, Dec. 10,
p. 384.—A female shot at Munroe, on Lake Erie, Nov. 12, 1885. *For. & Stream*, XXV

663. *Note on the Eider Duck.* By Charles Linden. *Ibid.*, No. 24, p.
474. *For. & Stream*, Vol. XXI

A NOTEWORTHY PLUMAGE OBSERVED IN THE
AMERICAN EIDER DRAKE (*SOMATERIA*
DRESSERI).

BY ARTHUR H. NORTON.

IN THE ornithological literature there has appeared from time to time, notes reporting the occurrence of the Pacific Eider drake in Atlantic districts of North America. These reports have been based on Eiders having a black V-shaped figure on the throat, a character commonly used, in connection with a white mantle, as diagnostic of *Somateria v-nigra*.

Such records have been questioned, but apparently a final decision has been deferred. Therefore the belief is entertained that a description of certain specimens of *Somateria dresseri*, taken on the east coast of the United States, is of sufficient interest to warrant its appearance here.

The present data clearly show that the black lancet is a character of frequent occurrence in the young drakes of *S. dresseri*; and there are strong reasons for the belief that it occurs in *S. mollissima borealis*. (See Hagerup, Bds. of Greenland, p. 42.)

During the winter of 1891, I received in the flesh, from Penobscot Bay, Me., a specimen of *S. dresseri*, showing marks of immaturity and having a distinct dusky or black lancet on the throat. It being unique in my experience, I wrote to the collector to send any other specimens having black on the throat, with the result of receiving another very similar to it, and two adult drakes with black spots on the throat, located at the position of the junction of the two lines which form the lancet or V when present.

On questioning several collectors who live on the Maine coast, I was assured that they had quite often seen such marks in young drakes. Upon the investigation of a large series of these drakes in all stages of plumage, it was found that this feature is of irregular appearance, or, what is perhaps best understood, as an occasional reversion to the characters of a progenitor from which it sprung, in common with *v-nigra*.

It may be stated of the birds having the black figure, that, aside from the presence of that mark, their only departures from the typical adult male of their species, are fully shown to be coincident with stages of immaturity, and that they show nothing that can be considered as of a hybridic nature.

Description of Specimens having Black Marks on Throat.

No. 342, Coll. A. H. N.; Penobscot Bay, Me., winter, 1891. *Somateria dresseri*, male, nearly mature. Differing from adult male in having a few dusky tipped lesser wing-coverts; dusky tips to falcate tertials; frontal processes but .9 mm. wide near apex. Differing from the normal drake in having a dusky V or lancet on the throat, 46 mm. long. This specimen is matched in a normal young drake preserved in the same collection.

No. 439, Coll. A. H. N.; Penobscot Bay, Me., Dec., 1893. *S. dresseri*, male, nearly mature. Similar to the last, except in having more dusky tipped lesser coverts, falcate tertials tipped with a deeper shade of dusky, and frontal process 12 mm. wide. It differs from the normal drake in having a dusky lancet .38 mm. long, on the throat.

No. 340, Coll. A. H. N.; Penobscot Bay, Me., Mar. 20, 1891. *S. dresseri*, male, perfectly mature. No dusky in white of the wing; frontal process 14 mm. wide near apex. Differs from normal drakes in the presence of a dusky spot, 10 mm. long, on the throat.

No. 341, Coll. A. H. N.; Penobscot Bay, Me., winter, 1891. *S. dresseri*, adult male in high (winter) plumage. Frontal processes 14½ mm. wide near apex. Normal except in the presence of a black spot 13 mm. long at the position of the apex of the lancet.

SOMATERIA DRESSERI, THE AMERICAN EIDER.

BY GEORGE H. MACKAY.

THIS bird is found, as far as I have been able to learn, only on the Atlantic coast from Labrador to Delaware, collecting in large

The Social Life of Arctic Birds.

BY THE LATE DR. ALFRED E. BREHM.

(Popular Science Monthly.)

“When the great architect of the universe had finished his favorite star, the earth, Satan aspired to destroy it. From the seventh heaven he slung down a great stone toward the blooming earth; but an archangel, witnessing the wicked act, flew down faster than the falling rock, and turned it aside. The stone fell away up in the Northern Sea, and was broken up. The fragments scattered on every side and formed cliffs, some of which sunk in the deep, while others rose black out of the waters. God in his infinite mercy pitied the bare devil's rock and made it fruitful.” Thus runs an ancient Lap legend. The rock is Scandinavia; the fragments are the innumerable islands that surround it; and the fiords are the clefts between the larger stone and the fragments. One should have seen the country, rowed through the fiords, and gone down the icy mountains to the lakes and bays, to appreciate the appropriateness of the Saga.

Scandinavia is an Alpine country, and has, like Switzerland and the Tyrol, majestic glaciers, musical, dancing mountain brooks, and strong rivers rushing over the blue slopes which are reflected in the transparent dark lakes. High up among these lie the prettily poised dwellings of the men, like Eagles' nests stuck to the rocks. To make the similarity with the Swiss Alps complete, the green meadows are also not wanting in Scandinavia; and, while the northern mountains do not resound with the exultant jodel, joyous, fresh, melodious songs may be heard in the valleys and on the heights. The difference between Switzerland and Scandinavia is nevertheless great, even if we only consider how the deep sea cuts into the land and forms large bays which receive, from the shadows thrown upon them by the dark surrounding rocks, a mysterious yet not fearful aspect.

The fiords of Norway are remarkable, but they are not the most peculiar feature of the country; this is found in the innumerable islands which rise more than a thousand metres above the sea, or, planting their roots in the boundless deep, are visible only at low water. These islands are

Dec. 1885.]

AND OOLOGIST.

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charming in the highest degree, and their peculiar beauty approves itself when the sun is resting below the horizon at midnight, and only a breath of twilight sweeps over the masses overflowed by the water. One might then well believe himself in a scene of enchantment.

The farther the traveler advances beyond the polar circle toward the north, the larger and more comfortable are the houses; while in the south, where the population is denser, they are of slighter construction. Yet no furrow is turned, no scythe is swung there; the sea is the field from which man derives his living. At the parting of day and night, when the sun goes away for months, the men sail recklessly in their boats and canoes to their anchoring places far up in the north, and their spacious houses are quickly filled with guests. Obeying the resistless drift, come hosts of fishes out of the deepest depths of the sea, so that the net cast for them mocks the strength of the Herculean men, or is torn under the burden. The throng of the foolish fish is so dense that an oar pushed perpendicularly through it remains upright. Millions are caught, and millions go on, so that there is no sign of a decrease in the number. This migration of the fishes reaches its extreme point at about Christmas time. No pencil could reproduce the picture which the polar sea exhibits at this season. Hundreds of craft, manned with stalwart fishers, are being incessantly filled with speckled prey; as far as the eye can reach, nothing but fish, which crowd and press upon one another to get to the breeding place; the massive glaciers and rock-built shores in the background, and, as illuminants to the scene, the ghostly moon and the crackling northern lights. All this time there is also twilight on the southern horizon, and toward February a narrow strip of the sun shows itself again, gradually to rise higher. With the first appearance of day the fishes begin to sink slowly in the fathomless depths. As the sky becomes brighter, the sea and its bays become more quiet. The boats cease to glide over the surface of the waters, the fishermen go home with their spoil, and the northern world lies silent, basking in the beams of the returning sun. But this quiet only lasts for a few weeks, when new noisy, swarming hosts come to the islands. They are the birds, which come up from the sea to the land. It is a deeply poetic trait in the lives of these creatures that only two causes determine them to seek *terra firma*—the power of love and the approach of death. The sea bird, weather proof, lives on the sea. He hunts his food by diving, swinging over the billows, and sleeps and dreams with his head hidden under his wings. But there comes a time

when the earlier sunbeams kiss the northern islands; then he is mightily moved in his soul, and hastens to the coast to celebrate there his annual wedding. And, when he feels that death is near, he swims with his feeble limbs back to the place of his birth, there to close his life. It is the same feeling that inspires in aged men that ardent desire to return to their old home to die and be buried there. To the naturalist who goes to the north to study the ways of the birds this trait in their character is of peculiar interest. Of one of the tribes of these colonists of the northern bird mountain I must make particular mention. It is the Eider Duck, the producer of down. It belongs to the family of the Ducks, and forms, so far as bodily stature is concerned, one of the largest species of the group. The plumage of the male is handsome and brilliant. In it black, red, ashen-gray, ice-green, white, brown, and yellow are mingled with splendid effect. His head and back are snow white, his neck is rose red, and the lower part of his body is deep black. The female is less richly colored, in a modest garment adorned with gray and black spots and stripes. The Eider Duck is a real sea bird, and is excelled by none of its fellows in diving, while no other bird is more awkward in flying and helpless in walking. On the ground it moves with a toilsome waddle, stumbles and falls flat; and it greatly prefers the fluid element to the solid land. The birds generally live during the Winter in large flocks on the open sea, and feed themselves with shell fish which they bring up from the bottom. But, as soon as the Spring sun begins to shine over the waves, the drake feels newly awakened the old love in his heart for his mate, and he renews his wooing. One pair after another leave the host and swim steadily toward the land. This wedding journey toward the breeding place offers a pretty picture of conjugal life. From the moment when the pair have found one another again there rules only one will, that of the Duck, to which the male yields fully and without wavering. Quite noticeable are his courteous attention and tenderness toward his spouse, which Madame Duck takes, as matters of course, in calm dignity. She steadily makes toward the shore, and finally lands, hardly heeding the cautions of her mate, whose instinct, sharpened by the experiences of former journeys he may have made, prompts him to beware of the devices of men. Loyally he waddles into the country, and follows her in her interminable tours while she is looking for a suitable nesting place. Madame shows an exceedingly dainty taste during her explorations, carefully examining every bush, shrub, stone, and protected spot,

Somateria spectabilis

1889

Mass. & Rhode Island.

Mr. Mackay tells me that he knows of two adult ♂ King Eiders killed in New England one at Nantucket, Mass., the other at Goat Island near Newport, R.I. The latter he has seen. It is in field plumage. Both specimens were preserved.

Mass.

Marionet. - H. K. Job tells me (Dec. 26, 1894) that two King Eiders have been killed here within the last few years, one in 1894.

1889

Nov. 24 Marblehead. ♂ ad. nearly full pl. but with light brown mottling on head & neck. Shot by Miles Blanchard. Mounted by Lufts - (Dr. Esch Co. Colln Peabody Academy, Salem)

1895

Nov. 15 Plymouth. - Mr. H. K. Job writes me (Jan'y 29, 1886) that an "intelligent gunner" of his acquaintance shot an adult male King Eider, with "full plumage" at Marionet Pt. on the above date. This gunner's brother had a mounted specimen, also an adult male, which was shot at the same place in 1885.

1893

Mass.

Dec 4 W. Medford. - On the afternoon of this day Mr. Geo. B. Fraser saw three large three seen & Ducks flying over Lower Mystic Pond. They alighted near the middle but two shot in soon swam in shore, diving at short intervals. By making quick runs Lower Mystic when they were under water he approached within gunshot & knocked P. Medford over two of them but he had to shoot at them many more times before he finally secured them for they were awfully hard to kill. The third bird flew out into the pond & alighted, but was not again seen. The day was clear but very cold with snow covering the ground & a violent North west wind. Both of the birds taken were mounted. I bought one of Fraser to-day (Dec. 28/96). It is in the plumage of the young ♂ but is very small for that sex & is marked "90". I also saw to-day the other bird in the possession of Morton E. Cummings of W. Medford. By whom it was mounted. It is a plain brown bird & evidently a young ♀ as indeed it is by color

Somateria spectabilis

Seconnett Point, R. I.

April 16-21, 1890.

A pair seen on the 17th, another pair on the 20th, a single male on the 21st. All of the three drakes were immature birds with only a little white on the neck and shoulders. Both of the pairs drew into our Coot decoys, but sheered off at forty or fifty yards distance. They flew close to the water, even after being fired at. I shot a female on the 20th. She fell wounded and swam off with head and neck erect, but when I followed with the boat did not attempt to dive. I shot her over to make sure of her. She looked large and light colored and sat high in the water. Her stomach contained ~~snails~~ and the claws of either a crab or a small lobster. I had the body roasted without previously parboiling it. It was by no means bad although rather tough and somewhat high flavored. This bird is well known to the gunners at Seconnett Point and apparently is of regular occurrence there in small numbers during the spring migration. The pair seen by us on the 17th was flying in a westerly direction, that seen on the 20th was going towards the eastward. The male seen on the 21st might have been the mate of the female shot on the 20th.

Rare Birds in Nova Scotia.

J. Bernard Gilpin

De-
cember 11, 1871, I saw in a Halifax market
three fine males in perfect plumage of the
King Eider, and never since.

Q. & Q. VII. May. 15. 1882. p. 123.

Birds within Ten Miles of Point
de Monts, Can. Comeau & Merriam

119. *Somateria spectabilis*. KING EIDER.—Rare. Has been known
to breed.

Bull. N. O. C., 7, Oct, 1882, p. 240

Birds of Toronto, Ontario,

By James H. Fleming.

Pt. I, Water Birds.

Auk, XXIII, Oct. 1906, p. 445.

50. *Somateria spectabilis*. KING EIDER.—Not uncommon in No-
vember and December; a few remain through the winter (February 4, 1889,
Hamilton, Ont.). Birds in full plumage are rare; a male taken on Novem-
ber 18, 1895,⁴ by Mr. Nash, now in the collection of Mr. J. H. Ames, is fully
adult. Males in winter plumage and females in the full red plumage are
rare, the majority being young. The males predominate. The usual
dates are November 6 to December 6.

⁴ Auk, XIII, 1896, 347.

Maine (Cranberry Isles)

Somateria spectabilis

1886

Near Mt. Desert

Nov. 27

On Nov. 27 I bought a young ♂ King Eider
(of Webster) in the flesh which was so fresh
that it could not have been dead over
three or four days. It was killed at the
Cranberry Isles (near Mt. Desert). It was
apparently in the second year (spec. in
coll.)

Off Boston Harbor, Mass.

Somateria spectabilis

Dr. Samuel Cabot tells me that he
has an adult ♂, in perfect breeding plumage,
which was killed off Boston Harbor many
years ago. (Note recorded after a talk with
Dr. Cabot, Jan'y 18, 1885)

THE KING EIDER AT MUSKEGET, MASS.—A
young ♂ King Eider, A. O. U. No. 162, was
killed at Muskeget Island, April 5, 1890.

Gordon Plummer records this specimen as
being killed by his party, and is now in his
collection.

[Mr. Plummer has a fine collection of birds,
the result of a number of years' collecting. In
addition to skins, he has paid particular atten-
tion to procuring mounted specimens of the
game birds. They are carefully selected with
regard to plumage, and represent the *best* work
of our eastern taxidermists. Mr. Plummer is
a thorough sportsman and knows when a bird
is properly mounted.—Ed.]

O. & C., 15. July, 1890. p. 110.

Somateria spectabilis

near Bridgewater, Mass

Oct. 21, 1899

Arthur D. Pe. Bridgewater,
Auk, XXII, 1905, 409. ^{Mass.}

Somateria spectabilis.

The Ducks of Plymouth County, Massachusetts.
by Herbert K. Job.

Auk, XLII, July, 1896, pp. 197-204.

See under Anas obscura.

Sturnia spectabilis. Coll of W. B. cat. no. 25122

This Duck was shot off the
Island of Nantucket, Mass on
Jan'y 15th 1891.

Description.

The soft frontal fleshy lobes
light orange (but as several days
have elapsed since the bird was
killed they have undoubtedly faded
from a bright orange) feet, and
legs ochraceous yellow - Lower
mandible on upper edge close to
the feathers, pale orange - Plumage
on back dusky black, Rump
paler ^(ochraceous) spotted with black, Lower
parts greyish brown spotted faintly
with pale yellow, Breast same
spotted with small yellowish (pale) &
black - brown spots, neck rather
dusky grey, Head dark, rather fulvous
brown. Claws black, webs black -



I took this Bird to be a
young male. King Eider—
but at Webster's, Frank. B. where
it was skinned, it was pronounced
a female with well developed
ovaries, his number for it was
5049—

Geo Mackay

Somateria spectabilis
(Ad ♂ shot
at Nantucket)

Boston, May 8th 99

William Brewster Esq
Cambridge
Dear Sir,

While in Nantucket I saw
the man (whom I know) who
shot the full plumaged
King Eider. I could not
obtain it for you, as he
had given it away to a
party who does not live on
the Island; It was all
alone the man said who
killed it, & no one seemed
able to identify it for
some time, none of the gun-
ners having seen it, which
indicates it as being
scarce. If you want any
full plumaged Velvet
ducks, or Scoters, I can

Somateria spectabilis. KING EIDER. — A young male of this species,
in Mr. Dyke's collection, was taken by Mr. Joseph E. Bassett at his gun-
ning stand, at Nippenicket Pond, on Oct. 21, 1899. The King Eider is
taken occasionally on our coast where it occurs as a rare winter visitor,
but has, I believe, never been taken in an inland pond. — A. C. BENT,
Taunton, Mass.

can procure you some extra
ones next April if I go to
Secorret Point as usual.

Can you inform me what
steps are necessary to pro-
cure the license of shooting
birds out of season for
scientific purposes? I
suppose it would be well
for me to have such per-
mission?

Truly yours
Geo Mackay

25 Congress St

Rare Ducks in Massachusetts.

Somateria spectabilis. KING EIDER. — A young male of this species, in Mr. Dyke's collection, was taken by Mr. Joseph E. Bassett at his gunning stand, at Nippenicket Pond, on Oct. 21, 1899. The King Eider is taken occasionally on our coast where it occurs as a rare winter visitor, but has, I believe, never been taken in an inland pond. — A. C. BENT, Taunton, Mass.

The King Eider (*Somateria spectabilis*) in Massachusetts.— Four years ago I had, for the first time, the pleasure of seeing this boreal species alive, and of closely examining in the flesh a male in nearly full plumage. It seemed to me then, as at present, the most beautiful of the Fuliginæ of North America. I became interested in its past and present status in Massachusetts, and made some investigations, the results of which are appended.

sort of information within a year from the same type of observer. It is marvelous how many statements get into literature from fishermen, etc., a type that in my experience has proved to be exceedingly unreliable as a rule. I am aware of one market gunner dwelling on the Atlantic seaboard who is exceedingly dishonest in most of his dealings with men, yet many of his statements have worked their way verbatim into American ornithology. The query naturally suggests itself: Will a man of naturally dishonest propensities in the pursuit of a livelihood, furnish ornithological data fit to be handed down to posterity?

The King Eider, as we know it, is apparently during the winter an 'off-shore' bird, and its previous reported occurrence near the coast would indicate a change in habits. Mr. A. H. Norton (*Auk*, Vol. XVII, No. 1, Jan., 1900, p. 18) states that *Somateria spectabilis* feeds largely on Holothurians: (*Pentacta frondosa*), hence their feeding in deeper water than *dresseri* which as far as I know, prefers in our waters, the common mussel (*Mytilus edulis* Linné) and perhaps *Modiolus modiolus* (Linné). On the other hand two King Eiders shot at Long Island on three to four fathoms of water were said by Mr. William Dutcher to be gorged with *Mytilus edulis* (*Auk*, Vol. V, No. 2, April, 1888, p. 174). If at former times they were near the coast it is reasonable to believe that they might have fed on *Mytilus edulis*, which is now and undoubtedly has been, abundant along our shore. That they were driven off shore before Audubon's time by the persecution of man seems unreasonable, for I am assured by a friend who has killed many Eiders in the far north that they exhibit no more fear than the other Eiders which are notably fearless. Mr. A. C. Bent of Taunton tells me that the gunners at Westport, Mass., state that these birds are common in that vicinity during winter, frequenting the outer rocky islands and reefs. 'Common' seems a strong statement, but the fact that eight were killed in one day would lead one to believe that they may be 'not rare.' They apparently know the King from the American Eider as they refer to the former as 'Cousins' and the latter as 'Wamps.' The species is undoubtedly more common than present literature and accurate observations would indicate, as systematic offshore work is a difficult problem for most ornithologists. Until further investigations are made however, it must be considered a very rare visitant in Massachusetts.

The majority of the specimens taken have been shot during the fall, but this, I think, is not due to the migration routes or periods, but to the fact that they were procured largely by gunners engaged in 'cooting,' a sport that in most localities where Scoters did not 'bed,' ceased by the first

Some Unusual Record for Massachusetts.

Somateria spectabilis (Linné). KING EIDER.— An immature female taken at Newburyport, Mass., by Mr. C. H. Richardson on November 19, 1915.— W. SPRAGUE BROOKS, *Boston Soc. Nat. Hist.*

Auk. xxxiii July 1916 p. 328.

A King Eider, (*Somateria spectabilis*,) was shot at Nayatt Point, Bristol Co., about Jan. 1, 1884, by Mr. Frank Tobey. It was an adult male. This is not the first record for Rhode Island, Mr. F. B. Webster having a female, which was taken at same place Nov. 27, 1879.—*Random Notes*.

O. & O. IX, Mar. 1884, p. 27.

1888. [*Bird Notes*. By F. T. Jencks.] *Ibid.*, p. 9.—An adult male King Eider (*Somateria spectabilis*) shot at Nayatt Point, Bristol Co., R. I., about Jan. 1, 1884. Purple Finches reported wintering in abundance near Rangeley Lakes in Maine. *Rand. Notes Nat. Hist.* I No. 2.

Notes from New Haven, Conn.

BY E. L. MUNSON.

November 4, 1883, I took an adult female
King Eider near Milford, Conn. It is now in
the collection of Mr. L. C. Sanford of this city.

O. & O. XII, Sept. 1887 p. 156

THE KING EIDER AT BUFFALO, N. Y. — Although the King Eider (*Somateria spectabilis*) has been recorded as occurring at Lake Erie ("Wheaton, Ohio Agric. Rep. 1860,"—*vide* Coues, Bds. Northwest, p. 581), and as a "rare winter visitant" to Lake Michigan (Nelson, Bull. Essex Inst., VIII, p. 143), its presence near Buffalo, N. Y., in such numbers as the following communication indicates, seems worthy of record. Mr. Charles Linden, of that city, in a letter dated Nov. 26, 1879, writes: "I send you a fresh-shot specimen of what appears to be *Somateria spectabilis*, young. . . . Several flocks of them have, for the first time, made their appearance in the Niagara; they are very tame, allow approach to within a few yards, dive readily, and appear again a long distance from where they dove. They are evidently not used to the lurking dangers of the gun, and have probably found their way up the St. Lawrence, up Lake Ontario, and across to Lake Erie. There have been to my knowledge at least eighteen of them shot. They are generally found in small flocks of three or four birds." The specimen sent arrived in good condition, and Mr. Linden has my thanks for the kind attention.—J. A. ALLEN, Cambridge, Mass.

Bull. N.O.C. 5, Jan., 1880, p. 62-63.

Bird Notes from Long Island, N. Y.
William Dutcher.

8. *Somateria spectabilis*. KING EIDER.—Mr. Giraud says of this species: "This remarkable Duck is seldom seen within the limits of the United States, although I had the good fortune to add to my collection an adult male in perfect plumage, that was shot on Long Island Sound, in the winter of 1839. During winter—at Egg Harbor (New Jersey) as well as on the shores of Long Island—the young are occasionally observed. But the adult specimen now in my possession, and one other, are the only individuals in full and mature plumage, that I have ever known to be procured in the vicinity of New York."† Early in December, 1886, Mr. A. H. Helme visited Capt. J. G. Scott, keeper of the lighthouse at Montauk Point, and while there had the good fortune to procure an adult female of this species. His account of the capture is as follows: "It was alone when shot and was feeding in the shallow water among the rocks in a sheltered cove. It was at first mistaken for a Dusky Duck, whose mate had been shot at this spot the preceding day. It was shot at and twice driven from its feeding ground only to return the third time to offer itself, apparently, a voluntary contribution to the cause. It had previously been wounded, the right tibia having been broken near the tibio-tarsal articulation. As the bones had not united the bird evidently found it difficult to feed in the deeper water. This will, I think, account for its attachment to the spot where it was shot. Capt. Scott reports seeing, while off the Point ducking, several Ducks which he calls 'Isle of Shoal Ducks.' They may be female Eiders or Scoters." January 22, 1887, Capt. Scott sent to me one of the Isle of Shoal Ducks, which proved to be a female King Eider. He reported them, "living off the Point since early in November (11th), when I saw a flock of four; the next day I saw ten at one time. They appear less shy than the other wild fowl, and will permit a nearer approach in a boat. In this locality it is seen occasionally in the winter months, on the ocean, from one-quarter to one-half mile from shore. It is not a common Duck, and I believe it is only a few years since they have been seen off Montauk Point, but this winter they have been more than usually common. There is a shoal, with a depth of water from fifteen to twenty feet, about one-quarter of a mile off the Point, where I go to shoot Ducks, but can only do so when the surf will permit. Every time I have visited this spot this winter, I have seen from four to twenty King Eiders." March 19, 1887, Capt. Scott sent to me a young male which he shot from a flock of twenty. April 8, he wrote, "I was out to-day and saw about thirty King Eiders, as many as I have seen any day this winter. I think about one-third of the birds were males." Late in the winter I wrote to Capt. Frank Stratton, keeper of the Ditch Plain Life Saving Station, asking whether this species was a regular winter visitant near Montauk, and he replied as follows: "The King Eider Ducks are quite rare here; I think I have known only about ten killed in as many years. I shot three, the first of November, I think in 1880. We see a few every winter, between November 1 and May 1, usually singly or in pairs, hardly ever in flocks. They feed on mussels or small shell-fish which they pick up from the bottom of the ocean. They never come into the ponds or bays; at least I have never seen one except on the ocean. They are very fair eating, nearly as good as a Black Duck." April 21, 1887, Capt. Stratton sent to me a male and female which had been shot off his station by one of the Life Saving Crew. "They were about one-quarter of a mile off shore, where the water was from three to four fathoms deep." They were both gorged with the young of the common edible mussel (*Mytilus edulis* Linn.), which Capt. Stratton says grow in large quantities in the ocean around Montauk, wherever there is a rocky bottom. The two specimens above referred to were the last ones seen.

ON THE PERFECTED PLUMAGE OF THE KING
EIDER (*SOMATERIA SPECTABILIS*).

BY ARTHUR H. NORTON.

IN A private letter written to me by Mr. Fred Rackliff from Big Green Island, Knox Co., Me., under date of December 30, 1898, I have this record: "There are three of the finest King Eiders staying off the east side of the island that you ever saw,—two Drakes and a Duck; they have been here over a month; shall get a shot at them before long."

As a proof of Mr. Rackliff's statement, the Drakes are now before me, and both are indeed fine specimens; but one, a superb Drake, is deserving of more than a passing notice, as it shows a pterylographic adornment, or modification of the outer tertials, not mentioned in the manuals most commonly employed by American students. Two of the outer tertials have their shafts distally depressed, slightly expanded, and curved downward (not laterally as in falcate secondaries); vane outlines asymmetrical by great production of many barbs of the outer web; the barbs of the inner feather have a length of 50 mm.; the vane having tapered suddenly from the base of the feather to this width, becomes suddenly constricted and tapers to the end of the feather which terminates with the naked shaft; the posterior outline of the vane is crescentic, owing to the backward direction of the barbs forming the point of the vane.

The produced parts of the vanes fold, the superior or inner of which is the longer, enclosing the inferior or outer, and both curve slightly upward from the plane of the back at a little less than an angle of 45°, having the effect of a pair of pyramids rising from the posterior border of the scapulars.

Nearly all of the so-called adult Drakes of this species which I have examined, show, though in a far less degree, a production of a part of the outer web of corresponding tertials, suggesting that this adornment is common in the highest phase of maturity,

The Food of Wild Ducks.—In December, 1893, Mr. William Dutcher brought to me the stomach contents of a Harlequin Duck (*Histrionicus histrionicus*) shot at Montauk Point, Long Island, about the 3rd of the month. An examination of the material showed what an industrious collector the bird must have been, for it had in its crop remains of no less than three individuals of the small mud crab of our coast, *Panopeus depressa* Smith, one carapace being almost entire; besides remains of some other forms of Crustaceans. Of the little shell *Columbella lunata* (*Astyris lunata* of the Fish Com. Reports), there were no less than 39 individuals represented, besides several small Littorinas. This shell is seldom more than one-sixth of an inch long, and is usually quite rare on our shores. It could only have been obtained in such numbers by a sort of sifting of the bottom mud of the bays by the Duck, and indicates how carefully the process had been carried on in order to obtain so small an article of food.

The contents of the crop of an Eider Duck (*Somateria dresseri*) taken by Mr. Dutcher at Montauk Point, L. I., on March 25, 1894, contained the remains of five right claws of *Cancer irroratus*, our common sand crab, showing that he had dined sumptuously on this species on several occasions. The last dinner consisted of an individual entire, a small female burdened with a large quantity of eggs under the flipper, making an object nearly two inches by one and three-eighths, and almost an inch thick, which he must have taken into his crop at a single gulp, without even disturbing a limb.

From the stomach of a King Eider (*Somateria spectabilis*) the contents of which Mr. Dutcher sent, I find the objects so thoroughly comminuted that but little can be identified. The hand and figure of *Cancer irroratus*, young shells of *Mytilus edulis*, and a young shell of *Lunatia heros* Say, which still retains the horny operculum, is all that can be recognized.

Two gizzards of wild Ducks, the contents very much comminuted, furnish, one of them, the almost entire carapace of *Carcinus amœnus* Linn. sp. (= *Cancer granulatus* Say,) measuring about three-fourths of an inch in diameter, the limbs all removed and the whole badly macerated. There were also fragments of *Cancer irroratus*, our common sand crab, and quite a quantity of young mussels (*Mytilus edulis*) none of which measured more than one-half an inch in length. A second gizzard gave evidence of three or four specimens of the small mud crab, *Panopeus depressus*, with many fragments of mussle shells, but nothing else which could be determined.

There is nothing among these remains which would indicate that the birds had been feeding at different localities within a few days of the time they were shot. On the contrary all the contents of their crops and gizzards would show that their food had been for some days obtained in or near our own waters, or at least within the limits of our own coastal fauna, and that crustaceans form a very large percentage of their food during the spring months of the year.—R. P. WHITFIELD, *American Museum of Natural History, New York City.*

Ank XI. Oct. 1894 p. 323

1918. *King Duck on the Great Lakes.* By Dr. E. Sterling. *Ibid.*, p. 350. — *Somateria spectabilis* and other Ducks caught in gill nets in deep water. *Fish. & Stream, Vol. 34, May 22.*

Ithaca, New York
Somateria spectabilis—King Eider taken at
the north end of the Lake (Cayuga), Nov. 26
by Mr. J. T. Lloyd.

Ank 27. July-1910 p. 345-

Uedemia americana.

1889 Mass.

Aug. 25 Cohasset. - Two boats lying off the ledges near Minott's light all day. I heard their occupants fire fifteen or twenty shots and twice saw a large flock of Boats pass them. In the evening I heard from one of them. He said that at least twelve hundred birds passed during the day. All three species of Sooties were seen. He killed five.

Return in
August

1895. Rhode Island.

Jan'y 29 Narragansett Bay. Went with Robinson shooting to-day on Bennett Rock, 3 miles from Narragansett Pier saw large numbers of these Sooties & killed several. They were more numerous than the White-winged Sooties, less numerous than the Surf Sooties. He killed one adult male.

Wintering in
Rhode Island.

Manomet, Mass

1894

Dec. 12

Robert K. Job.
Jan. 4-1895

Oedemia americana

Seconnett Point, R.I.,
April 16-21, 1890.

This species, although slightly more numerous than the Surf Scoter, was far inferior in numbers to the White-Wings during our stay at the Point. It was rare to see more than one hundred birds in a morning, and we never observed more than two or three hundred. These flew sometimes in flocks composed wholly of their own species, sometimes mixed with the Surf Scoters or with White Wings. They were tamer than the White Wings and decoyed ~~much~~ better. They were also much easier to kill, although extremely tough and tenacious of life as compared with fresh water Ducks. Most of the gunners agree that they are much better eating than either of the other two species. Mr. Mackay tells me that he has always found them far inferior in numbers during his visits to the shooting-ground. The

The notes of this Scoter are very different from those of the other two kinds, and it is ~~easy~~ easy to distinguish the bird when heard at any distance however great. An imitation of its shrill "Cree" will frequently turn a passing bird or even a flock and bring them in to the decoys. The gunners also attract birds which otherwise would go up without seeing the decoys by waving a hat or other dark object once or twice. The birds doubtless take this for the flapping of a Duck's wings just as it is on the point of alighting. When a female is killed from a passing flock its mate almost invariably leaves the flock and alights by the side of its dead or wounded companion. Mr. Mackay has known one to return five or six times in succession although shot at each time. When a male is killed however the female never pays any attention to it, but passes on with the rest. This Scoter, as well as the other two species, seldom flies in any numbers when the wind is in the north or north-west. Moderate flights occur with an easterly or westerly wind. The best wind of all is south by south-west. If the weather is warm and the air somewhat hazy, the conditions are favorable for a heavy flight, and at such time, even a dense fog will not prevent the birds from moving in large numbers.

The method of shooting Coots here is similar to that along the whole New England coast, the gunners lying off the land in boats, anchored two-gunshots apart. When one of the men discovers a number of birds approaching, word is passed along the line and everyone lies down in his boat. During this spring's shooting the birds are so shy that hardly more than one flock in a dozen comes within shot of anyone. Either they rise high and pass overhead between two of the boats ^{boats} out of range or else they double and pass out around the outer boat. There is no autumn flight of any species of Coot at Seconnett Point. They doubtless keep outside Martha's Vineyard & then bear straight across for Montauk Point.

Oidemia americana

1896. Penobscot Bay, Maine.

Penobscot Bay. June 23 ^{3 ad ♂}_{2 gray} flying past Deer Island near our cove.
 " " " 24 ³⁰⁺_{8 ♀} off N. end Isle au Haut diving close to Little Spoon Island ledges.
 " " " 27 5
 " " " 30 ³⁰⁺
 " " July 12 ⁷ All in brown or mottled black & brown plumage.
 " " " 16 1 brown bird

Birds within Ten Miles of Point
de Monts, Can, Comeau & Merriam

120. *Oedemia americana*. BLACK SCOTER. — Common from early in April till some time in November. They do not remain through the winter.

Bull. N. O. C, 7, Oct, 1882, p. 240

An Ornithologist's Summer in Labrador
M. Abbott Frazar,

Oidemia fusca. Velvet Scoter. Rather more common than the preceeding. Seen under the same conditions.

O. & O. XII, Feb. 1887, p. 20.

An Ornithologist's Summer in Labrador
M. Abbott Frazar.

Oidemia americana, American Scoter. A few seen regularly about Cape Whittle, where they spend the summer. Though none appear to breed, those seen were mostly immature birds.

O. & O. XII, Feb. 1887, p. 20.

Birds of N.E. Coast of Labrador
by Henry B. Bigelow.

32. *Oidemia americana*. BLACK SCOTER. — Common; less so than the other scoters.

Auk, XIX, Jan., 1902, p. 28.

Birds of Toronto, Ontario.

By James H. Flaming.

Pt. I, Water Birds.

Auk, XXIII, Oct., 1906, p. 445-446.

51. *Oidemia americana*. AMERICAN SCOTER. — Regular fall migrant, in October and probably November, never common; adult females are rare, and no males in full plumage have been taken, nearly all the birds examined having been immature. Males in full plumage no doubt occur, as one was taken at Belmont Lake, near Havelock, Ont. (100 miles east of Toronto, October, 1900).

Pedernis — — Aug. 23 Rye Beach, N. H. 1868.

16. *Pedernis americana*, ^{25-41.} Nov. 13 E. Mass. 1884.

98. *Pedernis americana*, — Nov. 28¹² (1885)

Pedernis ¹ *avari* 15¹⁶ Great Id. Mass. Dec. 1888.

Oedemia americana

Vineyard Sound, Mass.

April 18, 1883

While crossing from Nantucket to Martha's
Vineyard by steamer I saw many thousand
White-winged Coots but the present species
was conspicuous by its absence. At best I
did not see above a dozen in all, and
these near the vineyard, - most of them
in a small flock of White-wings. I saw
no specimens of Pelecanus purpurillatus.

Oedemia americana

Food

1889

Mass.

Marston's Mills. - Mr. Barnard Hinckley of this place
tells me that all these species of Coots feed,
when in the vineyard Sound, chiefly on
Mussels and young sea clams. He thinks
they eat fish when hard pressed but
could remember no proofs of this.
Coots come into the bays during storms,
but in pleasant weather seldom or never.

Ducks of Cohasset, Mass., 1860-92
O.H.E. Boston, Mass.

20. American Scoter (163). The least abundant of all the Scoters, but during November the young of this species are quite numerous and furnish good shooting.

O. & O. Vol. 17, June, 1892 p. 90

Notes on Certain Water Birds in Mass.
George H. Mackay.

Nantucket, winter of 1893-94. There have been about one thousand Scoters living in the upper harbor, coming in from the Sound in the morning to feed, and flying out again in the afternoon to roost. |

Auk XI. July. 1894 p. 225

Oidemia americana.

The Ducks of Plymouth County, Massachusetts.
by Herbert K. Job.

Auk, XLII, July, 1896, pp. 197-204.

See under Anas obscura.

Some Birds of Lewis Co, N. Y.
C. Hart Merriam

"*Oedemia americana*. AMERICAN BLACK SCOTER. — Saw a flock of four on Black River, September 27, 1877, and secured them all. The gizzards of all these birds were absolutely empty, with the exception of a fragment of a shell in one." *A. J. Dagan, Lyons Falls, N. Y.*

Bull. N. O. C. 3, April, 1878. p. 54

Birds of the Adirondack Region.
C. H. Merriam.

163 *Oedemia americana*, Swain. and Rich. BLACK SCOTER. — Occurs during the fall migration.

Bull. N. O. C. 6, Oct, 1881, p. 235

Albinistic Plumages. R. Deane.

36. *Oidemia americana*. AMERICAN BLACK SCOTER. — A specimen recorded in Am. Nat. (Merrill).

Bull. N.O.C. 5, Jan., 1880, p. 30

Before beginning with *deglandi* I must add to my former¹⁶⁶ account of *americana* (Auk, Vol. IX, pp. 153-155), as I have secured a specimen the feet and bill of which are different from any I had seen prior to that writing.

Oidemia americana.

Young male.¹ Plumage — compared with previously described phases — similar to that of "young male in autumn," but lower surface of body whiter, or about as in "young female in spring," with the exception of being less positively spotted. Shape of bill about as in female, but beginning of 'hump' slightly indicated, viz., upper half of maxilla at base broader than in earlier youth: pushed outward at sides noticeably, the culmen, however, remaining as before. Color of bill black, paler in part, changing here and there to olive yellow or yellowish olive, the inside of the nostrils brighter and more yellow. Feet: outer side of tarsus and

¹ Killed Oct. 16, 1892.

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TRUMBULL on the Scoters.

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outer side of outer toe dull dusky green; inner side of tarsus, both sides of inner and middle toes and inner side of outer and hind toes dark olive, changing to wax yellow; blackish shading at joints and elsewhere; the outer side of the hind toe almost uniformly blackish;¹ webs solidly black.

Oedemia americana

Occurrence in winter

Swampscott, Mass.
January 27, 1883.

Among several hundred Boats seen to-day along the Swampscott shore I made out a small number of this species. The greater number seen, however, were White-wings. This is at variance with my former observations for I have previously thought the Butter-bird to be the commonest winter species.

Mass. (Ipswich)

Oedemia americana

1885

Nov. 28

About thirty at Ipswich in company with Melanetta velutina diving down in to the beach, often actually within ten yards of the water's edge. I noticed that they were down together but one after another in quick succession, that they left the water rather clumsily making a perceptible splash, and that they reappeared in nearly the same place. When we approached they would all swim out returning soon after our departure.

Oedemia americana

J. H. Buxton, Shooting &
Fishing, Vol 19, no 9,
Dec 19, 1895 pp. 168, 169

A capital description
of Coast Shooting off
the New coast
perhaps the best
ever written.

A Sea Clam Drowns a Scoter.

The second instance of the pugnacity of a bi-valve is that of a Scoter, which was found by a gunner floating on the water with a large Sea Clam (*Macra solidissima*) firmly elased to its bill. The weight of the clam kept the bird's head under water until it was drowned.

The Scoters feed principally on mussels and other shell-fish, and this bird in diving inserted its bill into the open valve of a clam larger than it could handle, which resulted in a victory for "Herr" clam.

John C. Cahoon.
O. & O. XIV. Mar. 1889 p. 36

OUR SCOTERS.

BY G. TRUMBULL.

HAVING devoted a good deal of time to the study of these birds, I venture to call attention to numerous errors which have appeared, and to certain facts which have not appeared, concerning them. It is my intention, however, to devote the present article more particularly to the American Scoter, and to follow it at a later date with additional notes concerning the White-winged and Surf Scoters. The colors (in a marked degree transitory after death) of the bills, eyes, and feet, I have noted in each case within a very few minutes after the bird was shot.

It seems strange we should so long have neglected to familiarize ourselves more fully with the colors and certain other characteristics of these widely distributed and easily secured species. They present such exceptionally favorable opportunities for study, particularly along our sea coast, where in spring and fall men and boys slaughter them by hundreds and cripple them by thousands. They are also reached without much difficulty during the winter months, and a few, as is well known, tarry with us throughout the summer.*

AMERICAN SCOTER (*Oidemia americana*).

Though the inaccuracies of former descriptions, to which I would here point, are but indirectly connected with the plumage, perhaps I had better describe, with the exception of the well-known dress of the adult male, *all* the variations in this bird's appearance which I have myself noted. Indeed I do not see how I can well emphasize facts which should be emphasized, without being thus tiresome.

I have failed to witness most of the phases through which the male's bill passes while developing from the form of the female's into the swollen dimensions and brilliant coloring of the old

* Some of those which remain are probably of the superannuated and sterile class, but very many of them are convalescent or recovered survivors of the last shooting season, pensioners, as the gunners call them, which at the time of the vernal migration were in too crippled a condition to fly with their fellows.

G. Trumbull,
Aug. 9, April,
1892. p 153-160

deglandi

Melanetta velvetina.

Seconnett Point, R? I.

April 16-21, 1890.

These Scoters are by far the most numerous of the three species which migrate past this point. In fact, they represent fully 75% of all the flights which were witnessed. From 200 or 300 to ~~three or~~ ^{four} ~~as many as~~ ^{three or four} thousand passed every day, according to the weather, the majority flying between sunrise and nine o'clock in the forenoon, with a much smaller flight between three o'clock in the afternoon and sunset, but very few ever being seen in the middle of the day. They flew most freely when the weather was warm and the wind south to south-west, the latter direction being apparently the most favorable for a heavy flight. At times they would pass in flocks of from 15 or 20 to 70 or 80 every two or three minutes, and occasionally two or three flocks would be in sight at once. The usual order of flight was in a line at right angles to ~~the~~ course, that is, all the birds abreast of one another and just far enough apart to allow their wings free play. Usually they flew at the height of ten or fifteen yards above the water.

The spring migration begins here about April 9th and lasts into the first week of May. The birds all come up around Point Judith, but, in reaching the mouth of Tiverton river, separate to some extent, a few going up the river, others crossing over ^{the} land at Seconnett, but by far the larger number passing out around the point and heading due east for Gay Head

or Martha's Vineyard, and Mr. Mackay tells me that many of those which go up Buzzard's Bay cross the Cape at the head of that sheet of water. Between the 12th and the 20th of May, there is a heavy flight of these Scoters passing for two or three days, usually between the 17th and 20th, and heading in an exactly opposite direction from that taken by the birds which fly in April. The "May White-Wings", as they are called by the gunners (many of whom think ~~they are~~ ^{these} a different species of birds), always come across the water from the east and head due west. They fly chiefly/late in the afternoon between three o'clock and sunset. If the water is calm, they usually pass high overhead beyond the reach of gunshot, but, if the wind is in the south and blowing fresh, they fly low over the water. This remarkable flight has been noted at Seconnett Point for many years, and is of perfectly regular occurrence. No Surf or Black Scoters are ever seen among these White-Wings, nor are ^{the latter} they ever known to fly in a westerly direction while migrating. Mr. Mackay thinks that the May White-Wings are birds which have wintered in Vineyard Sound, and which start on their northward migration by way of the Hudson river valley. He has heard that they are seen in large numbers at this season passing up the Hudson, but he has no definite data on this head. While migrating, all three species of Scoters keep directly on past the Point, never ^{stopping}

Sacramento Pt. R. I.

Melanetta velutina

April 16-21-1890.

on alighting in the water, ~~never stopping~~ unless wounded or ~~rarely attracted~~ stopping at decoys. ^{set these decoys} These often draw small flocks and single birds. The latter sometimes ^{scale} into the decoys, but seldom alight. The larger flocks merely draw in towards them and keep directly on. The White-Wings are much shyer than the other species, as well as tougher and harder to kill. Their large size and striking coloring makes them look near when they are really far off so that a novice is likely to shoot at them when they are quite beyond range. They are ^{seen} ~~wild~~ birds and but once during this trip did I hear their notes,-- a guttural, almost grunting "Quo-Quoc" uttered many times in succession by a ^{bird or} ~~number of~~ birds in a flock coming towards me and drawing to the decoys. The White Wings move perhaps a trifle less rapidly than birds of the other two species and their flight is perhaps a little heavier, but it is still swift and firm. At least 90% of the birds seen were males, the majority of which were in full plumage. Of the Black and Surf Scoters we saw a good many birds passing the point in every direction, evidently local birds going to and from their feeding-grounds. These are ^{traders} ~~called~~ by the gunners. But very few "trading" White Wings ~~are~~ seen, nearly all being migrating.

~~May 1884 - 1885~~

Washington, D.C.

April 28, 1890

My Dear Mr. Brewster:

Your favor of April 24, is before me.
While living at Sing Sing I spent my better time on the river during the months of May, as I was fully occupied with the birds on the upland. Therefore I know comparatively nothing of the migration of the late ducks on the stream proper. During the evening of that month I used to shoot bats on the lawn in front of my house, and while watching for these mammals I often saw flocks of ducks passing northward, and from curiosity I made them out to be Scoters, but was never able to identify the species. On May 22, 1884 flocks

come so low that had I had heavy charges I might have secured
specimens, but the evening was too far advanced for me to see
any making in the birds.

Mr. Gordon Mendenhall knows a good deal about the migration of the
robins; I was talking with him on the subject when in Hartford
last November.

I congratulate you on your success in adding the Kingbirds to your
list of birds killed; I have never killed it.

I hope your errands to see with me that of a
naturalist and not of a sportsman, for I abhor the
sports hunting. As a sportsman my opinion is "put away
on the shelf of the past", as a naturalist it is continually
working.

Yours truly
W. A. Johnson,

Oidemia deglandi, [48493].

Cambridge, Mass.,
February [17] 1900.

Dear Mr. Brewster,-

On October twenty-ninth 1898 while I was looking over the ducks ^{in Fresh Pond}, I discovered among them a White-winged Scoter. It acted rather peculiarly and I called Mr. Faxon's attention to it, whom I met just after my first seeing it. On the first of November the duck was in the Cambridge bay appearing sick or wounded. For the next three days it remained there, becoming more helpless, and on the morning of November fourth at daybreak Mr. Hathaway shot it with a rifle. He went away while waiting for it to float in, and on coming back he found a number of fellows very attentive about it. When Mr. Clark came along and saw it he procured a pole and fished it out, but gave it to the wrong man. After much persuasion Mr. Hathaway induced the fellow to part with it for the sum of thirty cents.

That afternoon I rebought the bird for the same price and set it up. I found it to be an old male. I found a number of shot holes through its web and one pierced the head. Whether that was the original cause of its sickness, or, subsequent ~~faring~~ at, that I heard it received at the hands of the Fresh pond gang, I cannot say.

[Presented by O. A. Lothrop.
Feb. 24, 1900]

Sincerely yours
Olin A. Lothrop.

Oidemia deglandi

1896. Penobscot Bay, Maine.

June 22 Deer Island June 22 ♂ ad. flying past Drumbling Island.

" 29 Off N.E. end of N. Bristol Haven (Fox Islands). Fully 100 birds, most of them apparently males in full plumage, rose half-a-mile or more ahead of our sail boat as we were running in towards the outer islands of this group. Several hours later as we came out into the bay the same birds rose again, nearly a mile away.

" 30 . About 30 birds with an equal number of *O. americana* swimming in rough water near the middle of the bay. They were much tamer than those observed yesterday, allowing our boat to get within about 300 yards. When they rose they showed past us & with my glass I could see distinctly that rather more than half of both species were males in immature dress with black patches on a brown or grayish brown ground. There was not a single good black ♂ of either in the flock. I now suspect that I was mistaken in thinking any of the White-wings seen yesterday to be adults. No doubt all the Sooties which are hovering the summer here are either young or former old birds.

Notes on Birds of Grand Bank
R. L. Newcomb. - 1878.

A "Gray Coot" (*Oidemia
velutina*) was also observed, *Sept 17, (1878) in Sparrow Bay.*

Bull. N. O. C. 4, April, 1879, p. 128

Birds within Ten Miles of Point
de Monts, Can, Comeau & Merriam

121. *Oidemia fusca*. VELVET SCOTER. — A common resident. The
largest flocks are seen in April and November, and the species is common
all the year round.

Bull. N. O. C. 7, Oct, 1882, p. 240

Birds of Magdalen Islands.
Dr. L. B. Bishop.

17. *Oidemia deglandi*. WHITE-WINGED SCOTER. — A flock of a dozen or
more remained in the waters of the Gulf near Grindstone Island during
our entire stay. However, I do not think that this species breeds anywhere
among the islands.

Auk, VI. April, 1889. p. 146 .

Birds of N.E. coast of Labrador
by Henry B. Bigelow.

33. *Oidemia deglandi*. — VELVET SCOTER.

Auk, XIX, Jan., 1902, p. 28.

Birds of Toronto, Ontario.

52

By James H. Fleming.

Pt. I, Water Birds.

Auk, XXIII, Oct., 1906, p. 446.

52. *Oidemia deglandi*. WHITE-WINGED SCOTER. — Regular migrant;
common March 1 to May 11; in the fall through October and November;
a few are said to winter; spring birds are nearly all in full plumage.

White-winged Scoter, male—Taken near Portland, Me., May 9, '88. Bird pure white, with gray markings on head, neck, and upper tail coverts. A remarkable specimen.

O. & O. XIII. Aug. 1888 p. 128.

Summer Residence on Southwest
Coast of Maine. T. F. Montgomery, Jr.

165. White-winged Scoter. Rather common out at sea, in flocks of about a dozen. Especially numerous near Castine. I also saw another species of *Oidemia*, which I was unable to identify.

O. & O. XIV. Nov. 1890. p. 161

99. *Melanetta velutina* - E. Mass. 1825 - Nov. 28th (1885)

Great Id. Mass. Dec. 1838

Melanetta velutina - 14th - 16th 1888

Falmouth, Mass. 1889.

Mass. (Spswich)

Melanetta velutina

1885

Nov. 28 Several ad. ♂'s at Ipswich diving near the beach in company with *Oidemia americana*.

Omissions from the list of the Birds of Bristol County, Mass.

A. C. Bent. Taunton Mass

Only one species of *Oidemia* was mentioned, *O. perspicillata*, or Surf Scoter, commonly known by the gunners on the coast as the Skunk head Coot. In addition to this species, we have the Velvet Scoter or White-winged Coot (*O. fusca*), which is more common than the preceding and the American Scoter or Butterbill Coot, *O. americana*, which is rarer, but found under the same circumstances. The young of *O. perspicillata* and *O. americana* resemble each other very much and can easily be confused, which accounts for the latter being often overlooked.

O. & O. XI. Aug 1886. p. 199.

Ducks of Cohasset, Mass., 1860-92
O. H. E. Boston, Mass.

21. White-winged Scoter (165). Abundant during the fall. This species seems to be the least shy of the three and on this account are killed in large numbers.

O. & O. Vol. 17, June, 1892 p. 91

Water Birds, Nahant, Mass.
George H. Mackay.

General Notes.

Oidemia deglandi.—Feb. 20, 1891.—Off the entire north side of the island from Great Point to Muskeget Island where they had been living during the winter, I saw so many thousands of these Ducks, that for the first time in my life I gave up in despair at being unable to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion regarding their numbers. I will, however, state (for that I am certain of) that there were several hundreds of thousands. They remained until March 22, 1891. Nothing like such numbers has ever before been seen here. They were for the greater part, as far as my observation showed, immature birds. In November, 1890, some five or six hundred (estimated) frequented the Hummuck Pond until driven out by continual shooting at them. On Oct. 6, 1891, during a severe storm about four hundred came into the Hummuck Pond, and continued to frequent it, increasing to about fifteen hundred by Nov. 1, 1891. During the entire winter of 1892, there have been none to speak of living along the north shore of the island, and I account for it by their having eaten up all the shell-fish food last winter. In February, 1892, however, some thousand Scoters were in the habit of coming into the harbor in the early morning to pass the day, returning again to the Sound about half past three to four o'clock in the afternoon. Many of them were mated at this date.

Auk 9, July, 1892. p. 305.

Auk, XIII, Jan., 1896, p. 38
Nantucket and Muskeget Island Notes
Oidemia deglandi.—Sept. 28, 1895. A very large flock of White-winged
Scoters were observed on the edge of Squash Meadow Shoal.
George H. Mackay, Nantucket, Mass.

Oidemia deglandi.

Sundry Notes.

I saw a great many White-winged Scoters in groups
scattered over the sound. G. H. Mackay, Nantucket, Mass.
Auk, XLV, Apr., 1897, p. 228.

Oidemia deglandi.

The Ducks of Plymouth County, Massachusetts.
by Herbert K. Job.
Auk, XLII, July, 1896, pp. 197-204.
See under Anas obscura.

White-winged Scoters (*Oidemia deglandi*).—I am informed that a
large flight of adult White-winged Scoters going south was seen at
Cohasset, Massachusetts, Oct. 2, 1898. The birds were flying high, with a
gentle southeast wind. A dense fog in the afternoon prevented them
from being seen, up to which time the flight continued.—GEORGE H.
MACKAY, Nantucket, Mass. Auk, XVI, April, 1899, p. 179.

Oidemia deglandi
Spy Pond, Arlington Mass
(one ♂) May 9, 1905.
A. C. Conney

Auk X. 1905. p. 420.

WHITE-WINGED Coot.—Fred. T. Jencks,
Prov., R. I., reports a White-wing Coot,
probably Albinistic.

O. & O. ▼111. Feb. 1883. p. 14

Mass. (Hyannis)

Melanetta velutina

1888

striking telegraph wire

Dec. 16

One of Mr. Coys men on Great Id. brought in an adult ♂ alive with the left wing apparently slightly injured but certainly not broken. The bird was in superb plumage - as soft to the touch as velvet. It was alert and active but apparently not in the least timid seeming to enjoy having its head rubbed and fondled. Occasionally it would gape or stretch its wings when in our hands. It did not

Oidemia stejnegeri.

Auk X,
Apr. 1893
p. 176

Average distance between nostril and loreal feathering,—at nearest point,—in both male and female, a trifle greater than in *deglandi*. Frontal feathering seldom, perhaps never, advanced so far forward as the loreal. Knob enormously developed—over once and a half as high above nostrils as the highest knob of *deglandi*, its abruptly rising front decidedly concave, the top jutting forward suddenly and forming an overhanging, very conspicuous, bluntly pointed projection; the culmen somewhat higher at the top of this overhanging portion than at frontal feathers.

The knobs vary greatly even among drakes which at first sight are seemingly mature. Closer inspection shows us that when the front of the knob is not deeply concave, the bird is not fully developed, the basal black is continued far forward, shows more or less all along the lateral edges, and in positive lines running from the black in front of the nostrils to the sides of the nail. (See fig. 8 in which similar lines are indicated for *deglandi*.) On the other hand, when the front face of the knob is deeply concave and its top juts conspicuously to the front, the bill is broadly light, the black lines are absent (or very faintly and brokenly indicated), the black is pushed but a short distance in front of the nostrils, and shows but slightly along the lateral edges. Probably none of the color is at all as it looked in life, but the black marking is distinct enough fully to support what I have said.

Though the bill passes through innumerable shapes while developing from that of early youth, the culmen line of which is similar to that of fig. 1, none of its late phases closely resemble any of those exhibited by *deglandi*.

¹ I am unable to judge in the case of these bills in regard to the original amount of black and its distribution, as they have been artificially colored. Though the artist who did the work is peculiarly accurate, he was forced to obtain his knowledge of the coloration from very unsatisfactory pictures and descriptions.

attempt to struggle but was
 stopped its wings rapidly a
 few times as if making it
 shy. He opened its beak
 and it would not
 eat it. Its sides were
 slopy while its eyes
 intelligent & confident in
 expression. Its neck was
 much slender than, after
 death and was curved very
 gracefully. ~~strongly~~
 The man found it
 in a field $\frac{1}{4}$ mile from
 the bay and near a line
 of telephone wires against
 one of which it drew itself
 back in attempting
 to fly across the beach.

Oidemia stejnegeri.

Auk X,
 Apr. 1893
 p. 176

Average distance between nostril and loreal feathering,—at nearest point,—in both male and female, a trifle greater than in *deglandi*. Frontal feathering seldom, perhaps never, advanced so far forward as the loreal. Knob enormously developed—over once and a half as high above nostrils as the highest knob of *deglandi*, its abruptly rising front decidedly concave, the top jutting forward suddenly and forming an overhanging, very conspicuous, bluntly pointed projection; the culmen somewhat higher at the top of this overhanging portion than at frontal feathers.

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I am unable to judge in the case of these bills in regard to the original amount of black and its distribution, as they have been artificially colored. Though the artist who did the work is peculiarly accurate, he was forced to obtain his knowledge of the coloration from very unsatisfactory pictures and descriptions.

4/18, 1883

Melanetta velvetina.

Spring flight.

Vineyard Sound, Mass.

April 18, 1883

Crossing by steamer from Nantucket to Woods Hole I saw many thousands of these Ducks. In fact they were scattered all the way across. For the most part they occurred singly, in twos, threes and up to five together. I did not see a dense flock and none of them containing over fifteen or twenty birds. But in every direction, as far as the eye could reach, the water was dotted over their forms. There was no wind - hence no ripple - and scarcely any swell, yet they rose easily enough pattering along for a little way and

Oidemia velvetina

Occurrence in winter

Swampscott, Mass.

January 27, 1883.

In a cruise along the shore from Swampscott to Baker's Island I saw to-day at least two hundred of these birds. They outnumbered both of the other species. They usually occurred in flocks of from four or five to fifty but occasionally one or two would be seen in company with Oldsquaws or other ducks. We shot an adult ♂ in perfect plumage - as glossy black as any spring bird. He was so tough & tenacious of life that after

than looking up their feet under
their tails. They were wild, rising
of ten half a mile away. Sometimes,
but rarely, they took to diving
upon the approach of the steamer.

Of all the great numbers seen
not more than a dozen were
females. Just among them I
did not see a bird of another
species until near the Haystack
where we stalked a flock containing
one or two (the *americana*).

— few Red-tails (the *americana*).
There were quite as many — but
not more — Coots near the middle
of the Sound as in those I
have only few flying but they
must surely all have come in
here yesterday as then I did
not see a dozen which was
the same. Perhaps, probably they
were migrating north. (See)
no specimens of *Plonetta purpurilla*.

spending at least twenty minutes in trying
to kill him by "squeezing" we had to adopt
the genuine disgusting but effectual method
of running a pin into the back of the head.

Our "Skipper", an intelligent and perfectly
trustworthy man, tells me that these Coots dive
on banks where the water is 13 fathoms deep;
he has repeatedly seen them bring up mussels
from this depth when they seemed to be
completely exhausted, rolling over on one side
and gasping perceptibly for several moments
after their return to the surface. He says
that the human diver with their improved
armor cannot descend to a greater depth than
15 fathoms. (Look this up before publishing anything)

I have in my collection a Velvet Duck, (Melanetta velvina), which I shot Oct. 19, 1881, in Crystal pond in this town. She seemed perfectly at home, and was busily engaged in diving for food. *C. M. Jones, Eastford, Conn.*

O. & O. VIII. Apr. 1883. p. 81

Birds of the Adirondack Region.
C. H. Merriam.

164. *Melanetta velvetina* (Cassin) Baird. WHITE-WINGED SCOTER.
—Common during the fall migration.

Bull. N. O. C. 6, Oct, 1881, p, 235

249. AMERICAN VELVET SCOTER.—(*Mela-* *Birds of Central*
netta velvetina.) (Cass.) Baird. A common *New York, by*
spring and autumn migrant; a few winter. *Wm. H. Wright*
& Rathbun
Inadvertently omitted from "The Revised
List." O. & O. VII, Jun., 1882. p. 183

White-winged Scoter, ♂ Taken near
Portland, Me., May 9, 88. Albino.
O. & C. XIII, No. 8, Aug. 1888
p. 128

Albinism and Melanism in North
American Birds. Ruthven Deane.

Pure white specimens of *O. fusca*, have been taken

Bull. N.O.C. 1, April, 1876, p. 23

Oidemia fusca.

p. 173

Distance between nostril and loreal feathering considerably greater—at nearest point—than in *deglandi* or *stejnegeri* (not so wide, however, as length of nostril), this distinction applying also to the female. Maxilla

176

TRUMBULL on the Scoters.

[Auk X
April
1893

swollen noticeably at sides of base between corner of mouth and nostril, the bill differing in this respect from those of *deglandi* and *stejnegeri*. Though an approximation to this protuberance is sometimes observable in the other species, it is never so prominent and bunch-like. Lateral edges of maxilla somewhat more nearly parallel than in *deglandi*, and about as in *stejnegeri*. Basal part of culmen noticeably elevated, but not nearly so prominently as in *deglandi*, and incomparably less than in *stejnegeri*, rising very gradually and evenly over the nostrils. Anterior extremities of frontal and loreal feathering (in both male and female) about equally advanced.¹

1893.

Oidemia deglandi.

Frontal feathering—in most cases—reaching farther forward than the loreal feathering. Sometimes the two extensions are equal, and sometimes (I have only observed it in the case of two young females) the loreal feathering is advanced the merest trifle farther than the frontal. The frontal feathering generally terminates (sometimes acutely, sometimes obtusely) nearly on a line with the posterior edge of the nostril, sometimes reaching beyond, sometimes falling short.¹

Speculum, composed of secondaries and ends of greater coverts, white. In immature birds the black (of the male) or brown (of the female) infringes a little at either end of the snowy area, showing also on the tips of the greater coverts, and narrowly at the ends of the secondaries; but in all the plumages of both the sexes this speculum is very conspicuously large and white. Its dimensions, while the wing is fully spread, are about as follows: length 5.50 to 6.50 inches; width at one end (by the primaries) 2.75, at the other end (by tertiaries) 1.75 to 2.00.

Under surface of wing: a mixture, varying considerably according to age: in the male, from brown, gray and white (young), to black, brown, gray and white (adult); in the female, brown, gray and white.

Eyes: those of all the females, and of the young males designated by letters A, B and C, deep brown.

Feet: outer and inner sides differing about as follows: in adult male, outer side of tarsus and outer side of outer toe one color; inner side of tarsus, inner side of all four toes and outer side of inner toe another color; both colors showing on outer side of middle toe. In nearly adult male: outer side of middle toe showing only outer color of tarsus; this color also showing more or less on outer side of inner toe. Though there are similar variations in the younger males and in the females, they are too faintly marked for comment. These colors of the feet are always, in both sexes, old and young, more or less broadly obscured at joints and elsewhere by black or blackish shading; the outer side of the hind toe (or outer side of its flap) almost or quite uniformly black or blackish. Webs uniform black. In the adult male the black of webs and shading of feet, inky black; in the female and young male, less intense or dull black.

Dimensions.—Male: length 21.00–22.75 inches; extent 37.25–41.50; wing 10.88–12.12. Female: length 19.62–20.75; extent 35.88–37.88; wing 10.62–11.12.

¹ Former accounts are not wholly in accord about these extensions. I copy some of the characters attributed to the sub-genus *Melanitta* (or *Melanetta*) in which this species is placed. One authority says: "Feathers of side of bill extending obliquely forward from the angle of the mouth as far as those above." On another page of the work cited we read that the feathering extends "nearly as far forward on the side of the bill as above." Another and later author says: "Feathering of head advancing much farther forward on lores than on forehead"; but he gives us a drawing of the bill in which the frontal feathers are considerably in advance of the loreal.

perspicillata

Birds within Ten Miles of Point
de Monts, Can. Comeau & Merriam

122. *Oidemia perspicillata*. SURF DUCK.—Very common from April to November, but does not winter. The males greatly preponderate over the females in this species, and Mr. Comeau tells me that the proportion is always about seven males to one female.

Bull. N. J. C., 7, Oct., 1882, p. 240

An Ornithologist's Summer in Labrador
M. Abbott Frazar.

Oidemia perspicillata, Surf Scoter. Quite common; the most of any of the Scoters, and summering about Cape Whittle, under the same conditions as its two relatives. They follow their food wherever it goes, and were rare or common accordingly. Once when the bait struck into Wolf Bay, the "Coots," Ducks and Eiders were there in thousands, but it lasted for only three days and when their food struck out they vanished with them.

O. & O. XII, Feb. 1887, p. 20.

Birds of N.E. coast of Labrador
by Henry B. Bigelow.

34. *Oidemia perspicillata*. SURF SCOTER.—Abundant, in about equal numbers, and often flocking together. They came down to the coast late in August, and were soon very numerous in the fiords. Known as 'Black Ducks.'

Auk, XIX, Jan., 1902, p. 28.

Birds of Toronto, Ontario.

53

By James H. Fleming.

Pt. I, Water Birds.

Auk, XXIII, Oct., 1906, p. 446.

53. *Oidemia perspicillata*. SURF SCOTER.—Regular fall migrant, in October and November; the majority of the birds examined are immature, but there is a full plumaged male in Mr. Maughan's collection.

Davenport, Mass.
July 27, 1883. *Oidemia perspicillata*
Occurrence in winter.

Mass.
July 27, 1883.

Among several hundred Coots seen to-day along the Davenport River I made out only one undoubted Surf Duck. This being an adult ♂ was of course unmistakable. It was with "Butter-bills"

Birds of Bristol County, Mass.
F. W. Andros.

Oidemia perspicillata (Linn.), Surf Scoter.
Migrant, tolerably common off the coast.

O. & O. XII. Sept. 1887 p. 138

Ducks of Cohasset, Mass., 1860-92
O. H. E. Boston, Mass.

22. Surf Scoter (166). The most numerous of the Ducks which occur at Cohasset. During September thousands on thousands pour by, but, unless driven in by severe storms, fly far out of reach and furnish poor shooting.

O. & O. Vol. 17, June, 1892 p. 91

Oidemia perspicillata.

The Ducks of Plymouth County, Massachusetts.
by Herbert K. Job.
Auk, XIII, July, 1896, pp. 197-204.
See under Anas obscura.

Oidemia perspicillata.

Sundry Notes.

(I saw) also a much less number of Surf Scoters.
G. H. Mackay, Nantucket, Mass.
Auk, XIV, Apr., 1897, p. 223.

Oidemia perspicillata

Seconnnett Point, R.I.,

April 16-21, 1890.

The least abundant of the three species, sometimes mingling with the Black Scoter or White Wings, but usually flying in distinct flocks. The arrangement of these flocks and the habits of the birds while on migration are in ^{every} ~~no~~ way similar to those of the other two species. The Surf Scoter is fully as ^{silent} ~~as~~ as the White Wing, in fact, I did not identify its notes during ~~this~~ trip. Most of the males were in full plumage, but some of them had only ~~one~~ white ^{patch} on the head and the under parts of a light gray color. One male had two pure white feathers in the flank. T The females appeared to be more numerous relatively than those of the White Wings, but still the great majority of all seen were males. If a female was shot from a flock, her mate at once leaves the others, circles and alights by her side and will sometimes return five or six times in succession though shot at each time. If the male is shot the female never turns back.

R. I. (Seconnnett Pt.)

Pelecanus perspicillatus

Mrs. Geo. H. Mackay tells me that during the April shooting these Scoters are usually paired although many pairs ordinarily combine to form a flock which is led invariably by one old ♂. If a ♀ is shot from the flock her mate invariably leaves the others and returns to his dead or wounded mate circling about her even when repeatedly fired at.

Birds of the Adirondack Region.
C. H. Merriam.

165. *Pelionetta perspicillata* (Linn.) Kaup. SURF DUCK; SKUNK-
HEAD.—Occurs with the preceding, but not so common.

Bull. N. O. C. 6, Oct, 1881, p. 235

Unseasonable Birds in Long Island.

2. *Oidema perspicillata*.—During a week's stay at Montauk Point, from July 15 to July 21, 1883, I saw on several occasions a flock of 'Sea Coots' floating on the ocean about 250 or 300 yards from shore. To which of the three species they belonged I could not tell. On June 12, 1884, I saw a flock of at least fifty 'Sea Coots' in the Lower New York Bay, off Coney Island, but the distance was too great to determine the species; but on the 20th of the same month, while sailing in Gravesend Bay, about two miles below Fort Hamilton, we came upon three individuals of *O. perspicillata*. We ran down to within 20 yards of them before they took wing, but as the gun had been left at home, in deference to the ladies, I was unable to secure them.

De R. Beria

52 P. B. A.

N. Y. City

Auk, 3, April, 1886. p. 281.

An Apparently Undescribed Plumage of *Oidemia perspicillata*. — An adult female Surf Scoter, which I collected at Guilford, Conn., in the fall of 1893, seems to merit description as differing noticeably from the characteristics of the adult female as given by standard authors.

No. 956, Coll. L. B. Bishop, Oct. 13, 1893. Upper parts generally dark brownish black, becoming almost pure black on the top of head, nape, tertiaries, tip and part of outer web of primaries, outer web of secondaries, upper tail-coverts and tail. Below sooty brown, becoming somewhat lighter on the neck; most of the chest-feathers tipped with grayish white. Chin and upper part of thorax dirty white tipped with brown; well-defined white spots in both loreal and auricular regions, with many of the feathers tipped with brown; many white feathers mixed with the brownish black of the nape; side of head between loreal and auricular white spots almost as dark as back. Bill black with black elevation of knob at base well indicated, tip of nails of both mandibles pale flesh; tarsi and toes dull orange rufous, nails and palmations black; irides dark brown.

I have arranged in parallel columns, the description of the different parts of the adult female as given by Dr. Coues in his 'Key to North American Birds,' in 1884, and Mr. Ridgway in his 'Manual of North American Birds,' in 1887, with the corresponding parts of my specimen. It will be noticed that my bird differs chiefly in having a rather darker plumage, white feathers on the nape, and a loreal and mental white patch. The white on the chin I believe to be simply an individual peculiarity, but the other differences are possibly characteristic of the fully adult female.

	COUES.	RIDGWAY.	MY SPECIMEN.
Pileum and nape.	Sooty brown.	Dusky.	Almost black.
Lores.	Patch of whitish.	Indistinct whitish patch.	Patch of whitish.
Auriculars.	Patch of whitish.	No patch of whitish except in young.	Patch of whitish.
Nape.	No white.	No white.	Many white feathers.
Side of head.	Much whitish.	Grayish brown.	Almost as dark as back.
Upper parts.	Sooty brown.	Dusky, feathers sometimes with paler tips.	Dark brownish black; tertiaries, tip and part of outer web of primaries, outer web of secondaries, upper tail-coverts and tail almost as black as in adult male.
Lower parts.	Silvery gray.	Grayish brown, paler on belly.	Sooty brown.
Chest.		Tipped with dull whitish.	Tipped with dull whitish.
Chin.	?	Grayish-brown.	Patch of white tipped with brown.

Another adult female in my collection (No. 1338) taken at Stony Creek, Conn., Dec. 18, 1894, differs from this bird only in the following respects. Many feathers approaching hair brown and tipped with whitish on back, rump, upper tail-coverts and tail; lower parts a mixture of sooty brown and broccoli brown, the latter predominating, the feathers tipped with whitish especially on the chest. Nuchal white feathering much more extended and distinct; white of chin replaced by hair brown; space between loreal and auricular white patches only slightly darker than rest of neck. The brown feathers, particularly on the tail and upper parts, are much worn, while the blackish feathers are fresh and unabraded, leading me to think that the black feathers were replacing the brown.

While in Cambridge in the fall of 1893, Mr. William Brewster kindly showed me his series of this species, among which were several females with the white feathering on the nape quite distinct, and Mr. George H.

Mackay informed me that he had frequently seen this nuchal white patch well developed in the female. I trust that Mr. Gurdon Trumbull will soon conclude his scholarly article on 'Our Scoters,' with a description of this species in all stages of plumage. — LOUIS B. BISHOP, M. D., *New Haven, Conn.*

Albinism and Melanism in North
American Birds. Ruthven D. S. Dana.

Mr. John Akhurst informs me that he has seen an albino specimen of the Surf Duck.

Bull. N. O. C. 4, Jan., 1879, p. 29

An Albino Surf Duck (*Edemia perspicillata*).—Some time since Mr. Alfred J. Leavitt, keeper of the Boon Island (Maine) light-house, sent me drawings of a 'curious Duck' which was shot at that place October 13, 1884, by Mr. H. Z. Ellis. After some correspondence Mr. Ellis has kindly sent me the specimen for examination. It proves to be an Albino Surf Duck (*Edemia perspicillata*). Mr. Ellis writes me that it "headed a flock of Coots," and that its eyes were "jet black." The bird is not pure white. The throat, under parts, sides of head and neck, and part of the wing-coverts and tail are soiled white. The top of the head, a line down the back of the neck, and the wings are pale bleached brown. The markings are symmetrical.—C. HART MERRIAM, Locust Grove, N. Y.

Auk, 2, Oct., 1885. p. 386.

Pelecanus purpuratus

Concord, Mass.

Oct. 20th 1880

A young man brought me three birds
of this species which he had killed this
morning in Concord River near Balls
Hill. He said that his others had
escaped him. I went down the river in
the afternoon to search for them nearly
opposite Balls Hill. I found two of the immatures
& killed them both on my return. I shot
another which I saw out from the bank within
a few fads of me. One of my birds was an adult
& one of the two immatures. I have now seen its

Plumage was glossy black & the bill of a fine
dark highly colored as in spring & is nearly abrupt
the case when the birds are found in fresh water
they were not found. When first found at this
time of only two flew over others did not see
them & were repeatedly shot at. I cannot learn
that this species has ever been killed in this
river before but I saw a young *Oreocera fusca*
which was caught here in a Cornfield in
Oct. 1889. It was in an exhausted state but
apparently unhurt.

You have had no storm of late & account
for this flock

WHITE-WINGED SCOTER (*O. deglandi*) AND SURF SCOTER
(*O. perspicillata*).

h. 157

H. Trumbull.
Auk. 9,
April 1892
p. 153-160

I place what I have to say about these two species — or about their descriptions — under a common headline for convenience in presenting some of my more fragmentary notes.

In Wilson's work, Vol. VIII, 1814, the male of *deglandi* (believed by all at that time to be identical with the European variety *O. fusca*) is represented as having the upper mandible black at base, "the rest red." Its bill has been referred to in our own half of the century also, as "black at base and lateral edges; red elsewhere." The writer of this last description probably got the idea of so uniform a red from Wilson, but where on earth did Wilson get it? Surely not from nature. Another writer has lately described *deglandi* in a fashion as original. He says: "Knob on bill black, rest of bill and legs orange." It will be observed that though this later author has chosen a less sanguinary hue than his predecessors, he has carried it considerably farther, continuing it over the legs as well as beak.*

*The colors of the bill and feet (of adult male *deglandi*) are in reality as follows:—

Upper mandible: immediately at base black, this black spreading forward over the elevated portion or knob and continued along the edges of the mandible, sometimes as far as the nail, and sometimes disappearing brokenly before reaching it; sides purplish red, or wine-purple, changing to orange next to the basal black; nail orange, but of a somewhat deeper tint; from nail to knob white; the middle of the bill, in other words, being broadly white from the nail to the black between the nostrils.

Lower mandible: with patch of orange (including nail) at end; back of the orange, white, this white meeting irregularly with basal black which is extended in a somewhat varying degree toward the gonys.

Feet: side of tarsus and toes, excepting inner toe, dull purplish pink or light wine-purple; the inner side (or side next to the other foot), with both sides of the inner toe, orange-vermilion; joints and other portions splashed with black; webs solidly black,

slow to recognize his mistake. I wonder if any one has ever observed that he (Herbert) was also unfortunate in using in his 'Field Sports' the specific character of *perspicillata* for *americana*. He quotes from Giraud's 'Birds of Long Island,' but unhappily copied from the wrong side of the leaf, — page 329 instead of 330.

While thus retrospective (and captiously inclined?) I very naturally recall that specimen of *deglandi* taken in Alaska, which for a time was referred to *fusca*, and that other distinction without a difference, the supposed variety of *perspicillata* — i.e., *trowbridgii*.

Oidemia perspicillata in Florida. — A male of this species was taken January 23, near Punta Rasa, at the southern entrance to Charlotte Harbor.
—FRANK M. CHAPMAN, *New York, N. Y. Auk*, V, July, 1888. p. 319.

... on nature the theory of evolution is as fascinating as it is today, what interesting changes might be shown among the Scoters.

Auk, 9, April. 1892. p. 153-160.